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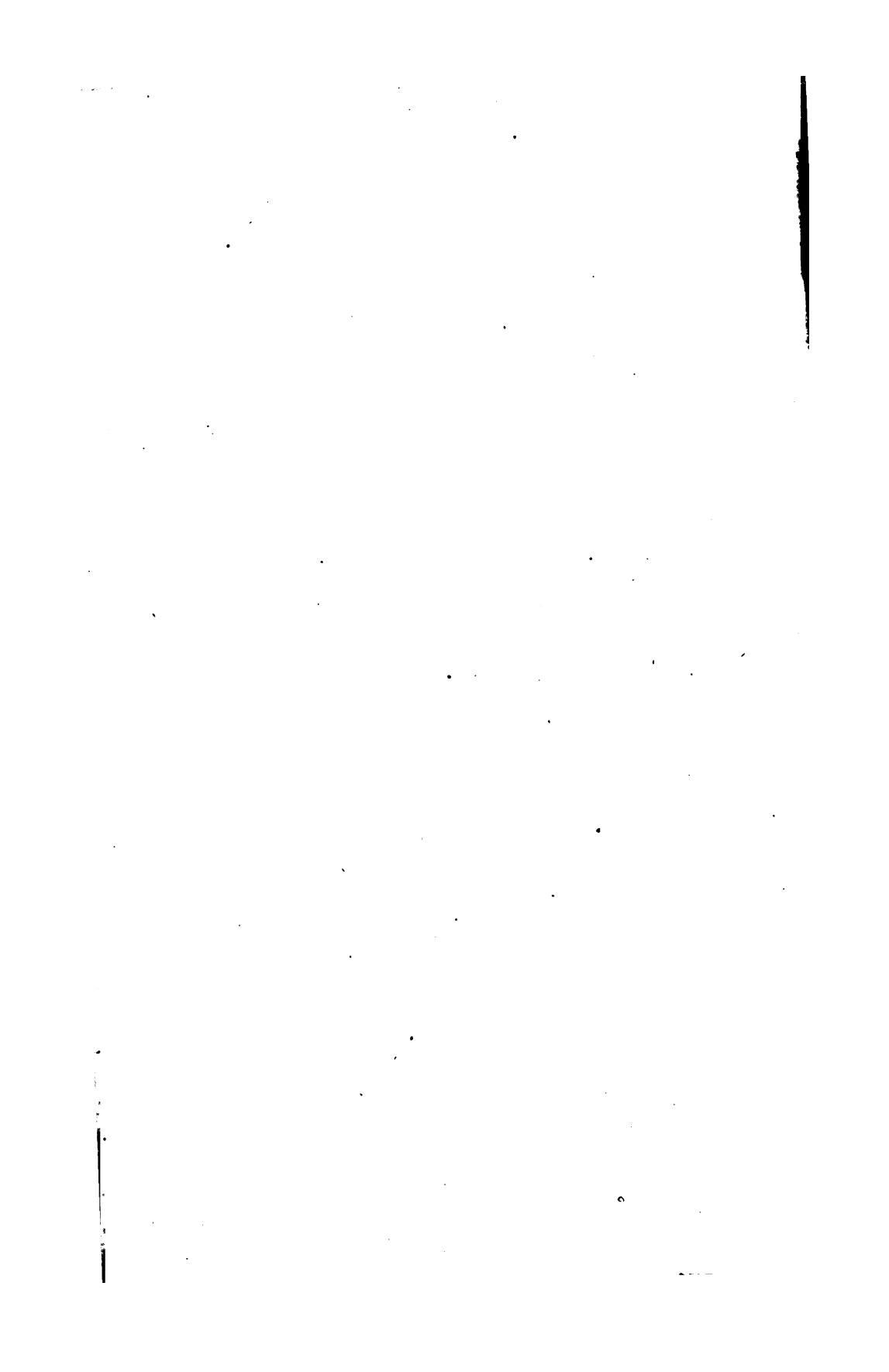
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LOVE LETTERS

VOL. I

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GEORGE FARQUHAR.

LOVE LETTERS

OF

FAMOUS MEN AND WOMEN

OF THE

Past and Present Century

EDITED BY

J. T. MERYDEW

TWO VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAITS

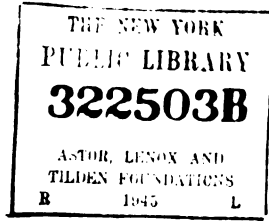
VOL. I

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1888

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AV



' The pangs of absence to remove
By letters, soft interpreters of love.'

Prior, 'Henry and Emma.'

' Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banished lover or some captive maid ;
They love, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires.'—*Pope.*

' Absentes adsunt.'—Cicero.

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LIST OF PORTRAITS IN THIS VOLUME

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POPE

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MONTAGU

GARRICK

PEG WOFFINGTON

SAMUEL JOHNSON

MRS PIOZZI

BURNS

CLARINDA

P R E F A C E

It is a matter of uncertainty in the minds of some few people whether the publication of letters, especially love letters, be morally justifiable. That it is legally without reproach is clear, if the owner of such missives, that is the person to whom they are addressed, consents to it. But whether it be right or wrong, the publication of epistles has always been a subject in which the public feels no faint interest. The desire of knowing that which was not intended to be generally known is a distinctive mark of common curiosity. That the great majority of love letters were written without the most distant idea of being offered to the world, is naturally and of course a rich inducement to every body to read them.

Nature never changes. 'It is now,' said Dr Johnson, in one of his recorded conversations with Boswell, 'it is now so much the fashion to publish epistles that I put as little into mine as I can.' 'Do what you will, sir,' responded Boswell, 'you cannot avoid it,' and Boswell was right. Though his philosophic friend seems to have contemplated the process of posthumous publication of his letters, with feelings far short of rapture; though, like the famous chemist, he preferred that the love episodes of his life should make a clear solution in the fluid menstruum of time, rather than that they should be precipitated in the opaque sediment of history; though Dr Arbuthnot speaks of such publications as adding a new terror to death, yet is the living dog better than the dead lion, and there are too many of Boswell's kidney to let the opportunity slip by of gratifying the public or themselves, by the open display of such lines as were never intended to be read save by them to whom they were addressed.

Even Johnson seems to have become reconciled to what, with such a friend as Boswell, he considered doubtless a necessary evil. 'As he had objected to a part of one of his letters being published,' writes his biographer, in 1768, 'I thought it right to take this opportunity of asking him explicitly whether it would be improper

...

to publish his letters after his death. His answer was, "Nay, sir, when I am dead, you may do as you will." Poor Johnson! He knew Boswell too well to give any other reply.

Dickens, we are told, was asked one day by a person of Boswell's character in this respect, for some letters of a celebrated man addressed to the novelist, of which the said person was anxious to make a market, 'but,' said Dickens, 'I considered the correspondence was with me and not with the public, and because I could not answer for its privacy being respected when I should be dead, destroyed it.'

Had such Quixotic scruples as these affected the generality of mankind, the most entertaining books, amongst which the author modestly includes the present volumes, could never have been published. It is pleasant, however, to add that many prudent people, knowing no medium through which entertainment and instruction can be so happily conveyed as familiar epistles—well aware that though, perhaps they want the accuracy of painful composition, they undoubtedly possess that sincerity and openness of sentiment, which goes so far to form the delight of postal communion, and sure lastly of the interest of the public in matters of this nature, have nobly consented to the publication of letters in their posses-

sion, in spite of the malicious tongues which assert that they were solely tempted to such publication by recklessness or vanity, by avarice or revenge.

The effect of avarice has been ungenerously instanced in Steele's second wife, who is said to have preserved every letter written by Sir Richard during twelve years. It is clear that this epistolary economy arose out of affection for her husband, she doubtless read his letters again and again in the moments of domestic leisure and privacy, and could not be induced to part with a single one of these precious documents. Will it be believed that this excellent wife has been accused of hoarding those same letters, solely with a view to making more money out of Sir Richard after his death. So great was her care, that some four hundred of his epistles were eventually published to satisfy, what has been coarsely called, the public appetite for scandal. It is true that poor Sir Richard repeatedly begged that these letters, written as they were in the confidence of the most sacred intimacy, might be shown to no one living, but his wife, strong in the righteous conviction that it was altogether expedient that one man should die for the people, made them in a happy hour the common property of the world.

The effect of revenge has been instanced in Mrs M'Lehose, Burns' ever famous Clarinda. When this erotic Ayrshire bard finally married Jean Armour, Clarinda, outraged, spake words which induced Sylvander to suppose that she intended to preserve his letters with a view, sooner or later to expose him on the pillory of derision and the rack of criticism. The expected event indeed came off in due season, but was the inducement such as the poet's prophetic soul divined?

It may surely be asserted that the main motive in the publication of private letters by those who receive them, or by others into whose possession these desirable documents have passed, is no purpose of mere pecuniary advantage, nor any outcome of vindictive spite. In the far greater number of instances such publication has originated in the most praiseworthy, the least selfish ends. The final cause has been that sense of duty which with painful self-sacrifice, widely differing from any imputed desire of the greed of gold, or any gratification of impertinent curiosity, or any love of notoriety stronger far than all sense of shame, has commanded the giving to the world these most unequivocal indexes of the real thoughts and feelings of its most illustrious ornaments.

And now *place aux Dames*. Clemens Alexandrinus and Tatian copying from Hellanicus the historian affirm that the first epistle ever composed was the production of Atossa a Persian Empress. The learned Dodwell has controverted this assertion. Many suppose the letter of Prætus to Bellerophon, or that which David composed in the matter of Uriah, preceded the letter of the Persian Queen. These however were rather libels in the technical sense than letters. They were at all events not what Gibbon has called the letters of Mme. de Sévigné, 'letters of the heart.' Of these surely beyond all dispute woman must have been the first author, as she has been the latest exponent. Surely it is she who devised this ingenious method of conversing with those far away, of making the absent present, Surely she knows with Donne the metaphysical poet, that—

'Far more than kisses letters mingle souls,
For thus friends absent meet.'

And oh! the charms of women's letters upon this subject, about which their thoughts and hopes and aspirations flutter and circle nearer and nearer as doves about their central cote. Even that grave historian Macaulay wishes only that there were twice as many letters of Dorothy

Osborne to Sir William Temple as those published by Mr Courtenay. Very little of the diplomatic correspondence of that generation is in that astute essayist's opinion so well worth reading. He is glad to learn so much and would willingly learn more about the loves of Sir William and his mistress. Of that information, for the sake of which alone it is worth while to study remote events, there is so much in Dorothy Osborne's letters that equally interesting billets might well be purchased, says Lord Macaulay, for ten times their weight in state papers taken at random. The mutual relations of the two sexes are in his opinion at least as important as the mutual relations of any two governments in the world, and a series of letters written by a sensible girl or an honest man must throw light on such relations, whereas it is perfectly possible, as all who have made any historical researches can attest, to read bale after bale of despatches and protocols without catching one glimpse of light about the relations of government.

So far then as the interest of love letters is concerned it may easily be conceded that the present book requires no preface of introduction for excuse or apology, to avoid censure or to solicit praise.

To recommend writings which recommend

themselves, to speak for letters which are their own spokesmen were at best but an idle and officious ceremony. Their intrinsic excellence will be duly appreciated by a discerning public which requires no ostentatious display of florid encomium. And how large is that public to which these letters appeal! Young and old, rich and poor, master and servant, married and unmarried, learned and ignorant, male and female, they appeal to them all. *Cras amet qui non amavit*, sings the Roman poet, and those who have never loved are few.

What man does not remember the composition of his first love letter, written amid all the illusions of youth, arising from a want of experience of the feminine world? The careful writing, the chosen paper, the blameless pen, the repeated failures before final perfection, the tender solicitude which allowed no intervening hand to bear the laboured missive to the post office, and the longing anxiety which awaited a favourable reply. What woman can forget the arrival of her first *billet doux*? the expectant heart, the trembling fingers, the delight of reading young love's artless revelation in some secret corner, where no profane eye might see her, and where her impassioned lover might urge his suit, uninterrupted by any voice unsympathetic with that sweet time. What

matter if the style would not be acceptable to a master of composition. Love, another religion, has a style of its own. The words of its fanatics are strange, obscure, incoherent, and often incomprehensible to all the world save the initiated. The style of lovers rebels from the canons of common sense, all the rules of rhetoric are delightfully broken. But young lips fresh in the season of love's spring, repeat their tender passages with such fervour of delight as Milton or Shakespeare might have attempted to call forth by prose or verse in vain.

Love, in its various moods, forms the solace and the glory, sometimes, alas! the sorrow and the shame, of the greatest portion of our lives. Even to the very old it shows itself a pleasing or mournful phantom of memory, and to the very young it appears as a happy dream of hope. We read in the letters before us, written by hands—the sad reflection must and will arise—now crumbling into dust, the utterances in unison of hearts and tongues, once warm and living, now cold and dead. But love is ever young in the old age of time, and green in this grey world.

In a paper of the *Tatler*, written by Addison, or Steele, or perhaps by both conjointly, is described a party merry-making in a country village, which is suddenly disturbed and broken

into confusion by the entrance of the sexton of their parish church, who has come fresh from the digging of a grave. The sexton tells this merry-making party how a chance blow of his pick-axe has opened a decayed coffin, in which are found several papers. These all turn out to be love letters received by the wife of Sir Thomas Chichely, one of the admirals of King William. Most of these letters are ruined by damp, and mould, and age, but here and there, says the *Tatler*, a few words, such as 'my soul,' 'dearest,' 'roses,' and 'my angel,' still remained legible, resisting the corrupting influence of time.

One of them—these letters in a grave—the letters which Lady Chichely had on her death-bed requested might be buried with her in her coffin, was found entire, though discoloured by the lapse of twenty years. Its words were these:

'MADAM,—If you would know the greatness of my love, consider that of your own beauty. That blooming countenance, that snowy bosom, that graceful person return every moment to my imagination: the brightness of your eyes hath hindered me from closing mine since I last saw you. You may still add to your beauties by a smile. A frown will make me the most wretched of men, as I am the most passionate of lovers.'

And the merry-making party, looking—how naturally!—with human curiosity into the coffin

to see fore-shadowed the representation of old mortality in themselves after a period, short or long, but in either case inevitable, contrasted— one cannot help supposing the most careless of that merry-making party there assembled contrasted—the brightness of that beloved lady's eyes with the cavities in her fleshless skull, the smile with the sardonic grin, the snowy bosom with decomposing putridity, the blooming countenance, and the graceful person, with a heap of crumbling and rotten bones.

'It filled the whole company,' says the essayist, 'with a deep melancholy,' and something like this melancholy,—though probably less in degree, seeing that the editor is not engaged in junketting, nor given to merry-making, and that only the letters of the dead are before him, and not all that remains of them in the body—something like this melancholy has fallen upon the compiler of the present pages in reproducing these epistles of 'Once upon a time.'

The same number of the *Tatler*, and the same incident furnishes him with an apology, if any apology be needed, for the introduction into these volumes of several letters as notably those of Steele himself, which were written after marriage, when the fervour of love's affection is by the generality of mankind supposed to lessen

and grow lukewarm or even, it has been asserted, cold. Another letter in that decayed coffin was found admitting of interpretation and written after the bud of love had blossomed into marriage. 'With much ado,' says the *Tatler*, who speaks of these old love letters as though they were so many cuneiform cylinders of the days of Esarhaddon, 'with much ado I deciphered another letter, which began with my dear, dear wife.' But to his surprise, the fondness of this document was, he tells us, increased rather than diminished, though the panegyric turned upon a different accomplishment. It was expressed thus :

'Before this short absence from you, I did not know that I loved you so much as I really do ; though at the same time I thought I loved you as much as possible. I am under great apprehensions lest you should have any uneasiness whilst I am defrauded of my share in it, and cannot think of tasting any pleasures that you do not partake with me. Pray, my dear, be careful of your health, if for no other reason, but because you know I could not outlive you. It is natural in absence to make professions of an inviolable constancy ; but towards so much merit it is scarce a virtue, especially when it is but a bare return to that of which you have given me

such continued proofs ever since our first acquaintance. I am, etc.'

The reader may derive diversion, if not profit, from comparing this letter of the brave old admiral of King William with that of the Prebendary of York to his wife on page 202, vol. i. Little did Laurence Sterne deny himself the taste of pleasure because his wife could not partake of the same dish, and very far indeed was he from wishing his dear Eliza to be careful of her health, if for no other reason but because she knew he could not outlive her. Mrs Sterne was certainly well aware that he could do this with the greatest ease.

It is a curious remark of Moore, which we find in his *Life of Byron*, that 'Love Letters are effusions little suited to the public eye.' He affirms that their monotony cloy the reader. As well might it be said that a fiddle cloy the ear, because it gives only the notes of a fiddle and not those of a pair of castanets. Every degree of the barometer of emotion, from the freezing point of indifference to the fever heat of madness, all the emotions of mind, heart and soul are clearly marked and represented in the following pages. Surprise, interest, attachment, and jealousy; affection, folly, suspicion, and despair; faith, loyalty, self-sacrifice and devotion, these

and many other mental conditions, so often hidden, are here fully revealed. We feel again the wonted fires of love in the cold ashes of letters written when George III was king, or in the long dead days of the good Queen Anne. We read them, and live in the time in which they were written. The souls of those that wrote them lie naked before us in their time-worn lines. The whole human palpitating heart beats in them making varied music, the marsh frog's croaking or the skylark's song.

The *Spectator* quotes a letter with every evidence of authenticity, written by some rustic Cymon to his Iphigeneia, to show how amiable ignorance may be when it appears in its simplicities. The treacle and the liquorish powder at the apothecary's shop are indeed graphic touches, and the linens and woollens with the 'one half of it slated'—but which half?—recall the economy displayed by Swift. It was writ by an honest countryman and substantial freeholder in Northamptonshire named Gabriel Bullock, and given to Steele by his friend, the ingenious antiquary, Mr Browne Willis. It came into the hands of a lady of good sense wrapped about a thread-paper. The lady was Mrs Cole, the wife, we are told, of a churlish attorney at Northampton, who would not suffer her to correspond with anybody.

'To her I very much respect, Mrs Margaret Clark.

'Lovely, and oh that I could write loving Mrs Margaret Clark, I pray you let affection excuse presumption. Having been so happy as to enjoy the sight of your sweet countenance and comely body sometimes, when I had occasion to buy treacle or liquorish powder at the apothecary's shop, I am so enamoured with you that I can no more keep close my flaming desire to become your servant.

'And I am the more bold now to write to your sweet self, because I am now my own man and may match where I please ; for my father is taken away, and now I am come to my living, which is ten yard land, and a house ; and there is never a yard of land in our field but is as well worth ten pounds a year as a thief is worth a halter, and all my brothers and sisters are provided for : besides I have good household stuff, though I say it, both brass and pewter, linens and woollens : and though my house be thatched, yet, if you and I match, it shall go hard, but I will have one half of it slated. If you think well of this notion, I will wait upon you as soon as my new clothes are made, and hay-harvest is in. I could, though I say it, have good—'

And here the letter abruptly ends, the rest

having been torn off. But Mrs Cantrell, niece to Mrs Cole, comes to the rescue. She by some divine good fortune, perfectly well remembered what was torn off by a child, perhaps herself, at play—and *teste* Mrs Cantrell thus it ran . . . 'good matches amongst my neighbours. My mother, peace be with her soul! the good old gentlewoman has left me good store of household linen of her own spinning, a chest full. If you and I lay our means together, it shall go hard, but I will pave the way to do well. Your loving servant till death Mister Gabriel Bullock, now my father is dead.'

Such is the letter of humble love. The opposite pole of the world of love letters is to be found in the romances of Mlle. de Scudéri.

A tablet of human life, a chart of man's varied passions, a map of the emotions, a *pays du tendre*, such as was described by the old French novelists, enlisted the sympathies of most of the readers of their time. What was with them Romance is with us Reality. We have but to read the epistles of the 'faithful Artemidorus' and the 'inconstant Clidimira,' to detect the difference between the false and the true.

As Love Letters differ in their emotional tone, so the form of their composition likewise varies. How should a love letter be written? There is

woman's character can be understood. No wonder says Balzac that men do not comprehend women, since God himself did not understand the nature of Eve. And these characters are infinitely varied. Singing always the same song, but always to a different tune, they are fervid or cold, pathetic or cynical, heartless or sublime, according as the writer is called Mary Wollstonecraft or Lord Peterborough, Keats or Swift, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu or Lord Nelson.

So in these letters we become intimately acquainted with the recipient as well as the transmitter—and yet though each bundle of letters has its separate individuality, there is one common thread of union running through them all. There is variety in the expression of love, but the passion itself remains for ever the same. Pliny, writing in the first century to his wife from Rome; Dorothy Sidney writing to her husband; Byron writing to 'that one sweet spirit,' the Contessa Guiccioli—the love which animates their letters is a constant—for ever old for ever new—for love is of the immortals.

We are it is true, offended sometimes with a want of responsiveness and sometimes with a melancholy reflection that the best of love is offered on the worst of altars. Sometimes we regret the absence of discrimination in the lover,

and sometimes the presence of an overweening vanity in the loved. The world alters little. True affection had as little fortune then as now. Exaggeration is as predominant now as then. But when we ponder over these records of those who lived and suffered in the past, we learn surely to unite sympathy for the sorrow with charity for the weakness, of those who suffer in the present. *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum esse puto.*

All the letters in these volumes have been given in the very words, as far as they can be determined, of their respective writers. Only such portions have been occasionally omitted as bore little relation to the subject of love, and these omissions have been uniformly and carefully indicated by asterisks. In no case has any profanity of retrenchment or impudence of alteration been allowed to transform the original text, in order to render it more palatable to the taste of the 'scrupulous reader.' It is only just to add that in some cases the original text has been presented with phenomenal incuriousness, and is perhaps hopelessly corrupt.

The author acknowledges a large debt for several welcome suggestions to a little volume,

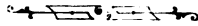
entitled 'Old Love Letters,' edited by Abby Sage Richardson, and published by Osgood & Co., Boston in 1883.

He has also much pleasure in offering his best thanks for general kindness and courtesy, and for their permission to reprint letters contained in this book, to the following publishers,

MESSRS BELL for some Correspondence of	LADY MONTAGU
„ BICKERS & SONS . . .	LAURENCE STERNE
„ CHAMBERS . . .	ROBERT BURNS
THE DUBLIN UNIV. SERIES . . .	SIR W. R. HAMILTON
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„ SMITH, ELDER & Co. . . .	LEIGH HUNT

The Editor proposes to issue another series of Love Letters within the space of a very short time.

LOVE LETTERS



GEORGE FARQUHAR

1707

Who is not familiar with George Farquhar? the fine gentleman, the dramatist, the wit, the 'most amorous of his sex' as he himself called himself, the author of the 'Constant Couple,' and 'Sir Harry Wildair,' of the 'Recruiting Officer,' and the 'Beaux Stratagem.' Who has not heard of the story of the expulsion of the young Irishman, or as it is sometimes phrased his 'elopement,' from the University of Dublin?

Farquhar, the most brilliant comic writer, in the beginning of the eighteenth century was in love with many women of his time, but of all these, the one woman who attracted him most was 'Penelope.' Who was Penelope? The

lapse of time, the perishable nature of all earthly things renders the answer uncertain, but she was probably the waitress of the Mitre Tavern in St James' Market, the girl who was heard to declaim from Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Scornful Lady,' the charming actress, who became famous by her successful impersonation of Sir Harry Wildair, in a word, Mrs Oldfield!

Farquhar's letters are without date save that of the day of the week, nor does it seem possible to determine their period from internal evidence. The letter which appears first in this collection was probably written after many of those which occur later.

Farquhar's acquaintance with Mrs Oldfield had already commenced in the year 1699, for in that year she was chiefly upon his judgment and recommendation admitted on the stage. She was at that time sixteen years of age. In his comedy of 'Sir Harry Wildair,' Mrs Oldfield established her great reputation. His letters to this lady, or copies of these letters, were, it would seem, returned to him at his own request for the purpose of publication.

In a letter dated from the Hague, he speaks of his detention with King William and others by a terrible storm. There is an ingenious copy of verses to his mistress on the same subject.

*To a lady, being detained from visiting her by
a storm—*

So poor Leander viewed the Sestian shore,
 Whilst winds and waves oppos'd his passage o'er ;
 More moist with tears, because by floods restrained,
 Than in these floods had he his wish obtained ;
 So drowned, yet burnt within, upon the banks he leaned ;
 Leaned begging calms ; and as he begging lay,
 Implored with sighs the winds, with tears the sea.
 One would have thought by all these mixtures sent,
 To raise a greater second storm he meant.
 Just so whilst kept from you by storms, I weep ;
 The winds my sighs, my tears augment the deep.
 With flowing eyes I view the distant side,
 The space that parts us doth myself divide.
 Here's only left the poor external part,
 Whilst you, where e'er you move, possess my heart.
 Deprived of love, and your blest sight, I die,
 Whilst you the first, and storms the last deny.

Gray's Inn, Wednesday.

'Tis a presumption to imagine that you have thought my letters worth the keeping, and yet a greater presumption to expect you should now return them, if you have kept them so long, but I hope the design will partly excuse my request. I have promised to equip a friend with a few letters to help out a collection for the press, and there are none I dare sooner expose to the world than those to you, because your merit may warrant their sincerity, and because your ladyship

was pleased to commend them. This makes me imagine, madam, that they have still secur'd a place in your cabinet, though the unworthy author could merit no room in your heart. Whence I may infer that they may be as acceptable to you in print as in my manuscript, but if you have a mind to secure trophies of so poor a conquest, I shall be proud to return them as soon as ever they are transcrib'd, for which I now pawn my word and honour, as sincerely, as I once did the heart of,—MADAM—Your most humble servant.

*Tuesday Morning, one stocking
on and t'other off.*

I have had your letter, madam, and all that I understand by it is that your hand is as great a riddle as your face, and 'tis as difficult to find out your sense in your characters as to know your beauty in your mask; but I have at last conquered the . . . of your writing as I hope one day I shall that of . . .; and I'm sure you han't lost your . . . if the lines in your complexion be half so crooked as those in your letter.

I return your compliment of advice in the same number of particulars that you were pleas'd to send me.

First, if you are not hansom, never show a face that may frighten away that admirer which your wit has engaged.

Secondly, never believe what a gentleman speaks to you in a mask, for while the ladies were* (*sic*) double faces, 'tis but justice that our words shou'd bear a double meaning.

Lastly, you must never advise a man against wandering if you design to be his guide.

You tell me of swearing to a known lie. I don't remember, madam, that I ever swore I lov'd you, tho' I must confess that a little lady in a half mourning mantue and a deep morning † (*sic*) complexion has run in my head so much since *Monday* night that I'm afraid she will soon get into my heart.

But now, madam, hear my misfortune—

*The angry Fates and dire Stage-coach
Upon my liberty incroach,
To bear me hence with many a jog,
From thee, my charming dear Incog.
Unhappy wretch ! at once who feels
O'erturns of hack and fortune's wheels.*

This is my epitaph, madam, for now I'm a dead man, and the stage-coach may most properly be call'd my Herse, bearing the corps only of

* † *Wear.*

† † *Mourning, or a complimentary comparison with the rosy dawn.*

deceas'd F——r; for his soul is left with you, whom he loves above all womankind, by which you may judge of the height of his passion, for he cares not one farthing for your whole sex, as I hope to be saved.

Thursday, 11 o'clock.

Bopeep is child's play and 'tis time for a man to be tired of it. I went yesterday to *Bedlam* upon your mad assignation, stay'd till seven like a fool, to expect one who, unless she were mad, wou'd never come. I began to believe that they are only wise that are there, and we possess'd that put them* in. They at least have this advantage over us lunaticks at liberty, that they find pleasure in their frenzy, and we a torment in our reason.

I was so tired with walking there so long that I could not bear the fatigue of putting off my cloaths, but sat up all night at the tavern, so that your letter is but just come to my hands, when like *Prince Prettyman*,† I have one boot on

* Cf. Horace, Sat. ii., 3, and Boileau, Sat. iv.

† In love with *Cloris*. Duke of Buckingham *The Rehearsal*. He is said to be a parody on 'Leonidas' in Dryden's *Marriage à la mode*.

'How has my passion made me *Cupid's* scoff!
This hasty boot is on, the other off.

My legs, the emblem of my vicious thought, &c.
Goes out hopping with one boot on and the other off.

and t'other off, love and honour have a strong battel, but here comes my friend to claim my engagement, so love is put to the rout and away for *Essex* immediately, but a word of advice before we part.

Pray consider, madam, whether your good or ill stars have usually the most ascendant over your inclinations, and accordingly prosecute your intentions of corresponding with me or not. Wou'd you be advis'd by me you wou'd let it alone, for by the uneasiness that my small converse has already rais'd in me I guess at the greater disturbance of being farther exposed to your charms, unless I may hope for something which my vanity is too weak to ensure.

Fortune has always been my adversary, and I may conclude that woman, who is much of her nature may use me the same way, but if you prove as blind as she you may perhaps love me as much as she hates me.

My humble service to your two sister fairies, and so the devil take you all.

If you will answer this—you may.

It was on this occasion that the following poem was probably composed and sent to her:—

THE ASSIGNATION, A SONG

The minute's past, appointed by my Fair,
 The minute's fled
 And leaves me dead
 With anguish and despair.

My flatter'd hopes their flight did make
 With the appointed hour—
 None can the minutes past o'ertake,
 And nought my hopes restore.

Cease your plaints and make no moan,
 Thou sad repining swain ;
 Although the fleeting hour be gone
 The place does still remain.

The place remains, and she may make
 Amends for all your pain ;
 Her presence can past time o'ertake,
 Her love your hopes regain.

Essex, Fryday Morning.

I have been a-horseback, madam, all this morning which has so discompos'd my hand and head, that I can hardly think or write sense. The posture of my affairs is a little extraordinary in some other parts about me, for my saddle was very uneasy. The hare we hunted put me in mind of a mistress which we must gallop after with hazard of breaking our necks, and after all our pains, the Puss may prove a witch at the long run.



ANNE OLDFIELD.

I have had no female in my company since I left the town, or anything of your sex to entertain me: for your *Essex*-women, like your *Essex*-calves, are only butcher's meat; and if I must cater for myself commend me to a pit partridge,* which comes pretty cheap, and where I have my chance of a whole covy; how well I love this kind of meat you may guess when I assure you that I have purely fed upon your idea ever since, which has stuck as close to me as my shirt, which by the way I haven't shifted since I came to the country; for clean linnen is not so modish here as a lover might require.

I received just now an impertinent piece of banter from an angry Fair; she says I pawn'd my soul to the Devil for the great success of my play. But her ladyship is thus angry because I would not pawn my body to the Devil for another sort of play, of which I presume the lady to be a very competent judge. I shall disappoint her now as formerly, for I will set her raging mad with the calmness of my answer.

Besides, madam, there is nothing can put me out of humour that comes by that post which brings me a line from you, tho' I must tell you in plain terms, that I begin to have but a mean opinion of your beauty, for were it in the least

* A lady in the Pit of a theatre.

parallel to your wit the number of your other conquests would raise your vanity above any correspondence with a person whose chief merit is his indifference.

Gray's Inn, Wednesday Morning.

The arguments made use of last night for still keeping on your mask, I endeavoured to refute with reason, but that proving ineffectual I'll try the force of rhyme, and send you the heads of our chat in a poetical dialogue between you and I:—

YOU

Thus images are veiled which you adore ;
Your ignorance does raise your zeal the more.

I

All image-worship for false zeal is held ;
False idols ought indeed to be concealed.

YOU

Thus oracles of old were still received,
The more ambiguous still the more believed.

I

But oracles of old were seldom true,
The devil was in 'em—sure he's not in you.

YOU

Thus masqued in mysteries does the Godhead stand,
The more observed, the greater his command.

I

The Godhead's hidden power would soon be past,
Did we not hope to see his face at last.

YOU

You are my slave already, sir, you know,
To show more charms would but increase your woe ;
I scorn an insult to a conquered foe.

I

I am your slave, 'tis true ; but still you see
All slaves by nature struggle to be free.
But if you would secure the stubborn prize,
Add to your wit the fetters of your eyes :
Thus pleased with thralldom would I kiss my chain,
And ne'er think more of liberty again.

Sunday, after Sermon.

I came, I saw, and was conquered ; never had man more to say, yet can I say nothing ; where others go to save their souls, there have I lost mine ; but I hope that Divinity which has the justest title to its service has received it ; but I will endeavour to suspend these raptures for a moment, and talk calmly.—

Nothing on earth, madam, can charm beyond your wit but your beauty : after this not to love you would proclaim me a fool ; and to say I did when I thought otherwise would pronounce me a knave ; if anybody called me either I should resent it ; and if you but think me either I shall break my heart.

You have already, madam, seen enough of me to create a liking or an aversion; your sense is above your sex, then let your proceeding be so likewise, and tell me plainly what I have to hope for. Were I to consult my merits my humility would chide any shadow of hope; but after a sight of such a face whose whole composition is a smile of good nature, why should I be so unjust as to suspect you of cruelty. Let me either live in *London* and be happy or retire again to my desert to check my vanity that drew me thence; but let me beg to receive my sentence from your own mouth, that I may hear you speak and see you look at the same time; then let me be unfortunate if I can.

If you are not the lady in mourning that sat upon my right hand at church, you may go to the devil, for I'm sure you're a witch.

MADAM,—If I haven't begun thrice to write, and as often thrown away my pen, may I never take it up again; my head and my heart have been at cuffs about you two long hours,—says my head, you're a coxcomb for troubling your noddle with a lady whose beauty is as much above your pretensions as your merit is below her love.

Then answers my heart,—Good Mr Head, you're a blockhead. I know Mr F——r's merit better than you ; as for your part, I know you to be as whimsical as the devil, and changing with every new notion that offers, but for my share I am fixt, and can stick to my opinion of a lady's merit for ever, and if the fair she can secure an interest in me, Monsieur Head, you may go whistle.

Come, come, (answered my head) you, Mr Heart, are always leading the gentleman into some inconvenience or other ; was it not you that first enticed him to talk to this lady ? Your damn'd confounded warmth made him like this lady, and your busy impertinence has made him write to her ; your leaping and skipping disturbs his sleep by night and his good humour by day : in short, sir, I will hear no more on't ; I am head, and will be obeyed.

You lie, sir, replied my heart (being very angry), I am head in matters of love, and if you don't give your consent, you shall be forced, for I am sure that in this case all the members will be on my side. What say you, gentlemen Hands !

Oh (say the hands), we would not forego the tickling pleasure of touching a delicious white soft skin for the world.

Well, what say you, Mr Tongue ?

Zounds, says the linguist, there is more extasy in speaking three soft words of Mr Heart's suggesting than whole orations of Signior Head's, so I am for the lady, and here's my honest neighbour, Lips, will stick to't.

By the sweet power of kisses, that we will, (replied the lips) and presently some other worthy members, standing up for the Heart, they laid violent hands (*nemine contradicente*) on poor Head, and knocked out his brains. So now, madam, behold me, as perfect a lover as any in Christendom, my heart firmly dictating every word I say. The little rebel throws itself into your power, and if you don't support it in the cause it has taken up for your sake, think what will be the condition of the headless and heartless FARQUHAR.

Monday, Twelve o'clock at night.

Give me leave to call you dear madam, and tell you that I am now stepping into bed, and that I speak with as much sincerity as if I were stepping into my grave. Sleep is so great an emblem of death that my words ought to be as real as if I were sure never to awaken; then may I never again be blest with the light of the sun and the joys of *Wednesday* if you are not as dear

to me as my hopes of waking in health to-morrow morning. Your charms lead me, my inclinations prompt me, and my reason confirms me.—MADAM, your faithful and humble servant.

My humble service to the lady who must be chief mediator for my happiness.

Friday Night, Eleven o'clock.

If you find no more rest from your thoughts in bed than I do, I could wish you, madam, to be always there, for there I am most in love. I went to the play this evening and the music roused my soul to such a pitch of passion that I was almost mad with melancholy. I flew thence to *Spring Garden* where with envious eyes I saw every man pick up his mate, whilst I alone walked like solitary *Adam* before the creation of *Eve*, but the place was no paradise to me, nothing I found entertaining but the nightingale which methought in sweet notes like your own pronounced the name of my dear *Penelope*—*as the fool thinketh the bell clinketh*. From hence I retired to the tavern where methought the shining glass represented your fair person, and the sparkling wine within it looked like your lovely wit and spirit. I met my dear mistress in everything, and I propose presently to see her in a lively dream, since the last

thing I do is to kiss her dear letter, clasp her charming ideal in my arms, and so fall fast asleep—

*My morning songs, my evening prayers,
My daily musings, nightly cares.*

Adieu !

In another letter he writes to her thus anent her dog Adonis and a water-rat—

My rival is a dog of parts,
That captivates the ladies' hearts ;
And yet by Jove (I scorn to forge)
Adonis' self must yield to *George*.
I am a dog as well as he
Can fawn upon a lady's knee ;
My ears as long, and I can bark
To guard my mistress in the dark :
I han't four legs, that's no hard sentence,
For I can paw and scrape acquaintance.
I am a dog that admires you,
And I'm a dog if this ben't true ;
And if Adonis does outrival me,
Then I'm a greater son of a bitch than he.
Reach my waistcoat—but ne'er trouble it,
I am already a dog in a doublet.

Was ever such a poetical puppy seen? But when my mistress is sick, 'tis then *dog-days* with me, tho' 'tis but a cur's trick I must confess, but I would be content to bark at this rate all my life so that I might hunt away all rats and mice from my fair angel, whose fearful temper is the only

mark of mortality about her. The remembrance of the water-rat last night has inspired me with the following lines—

Fair Rosamond did little think
 Her crystal pond should turn a sink,
 To harbour vermin that might swim
 And frighten beauties from the brim.
 Henceforth detested pond, no more
 Shall beauties crown your verdant shore ;
 Your waves so famed for amorous league,
 Are now turned ratsbane to intrigue—

Now, good-morrow my fair creature and let me know how you're recovered from your fright.

DEAR MADAM,—Now I write with my aking hand the dictates of my aking heart, my body and my soul are of a piece, both uneasy for want of my dear *Penelope*. Excuse me, madam, for troubling you with my distemper ; but my hand is so ill, that it can write nothing else, because it can go no farther.

Misfortunes always lay hold on me when I forsake my love or fall short of my duty, your coach was full and Mr C——r was vanished so I had no pretence left to avoid some sober friends that would haul me into a cellar to drink

cyder, a dark, chilly, confounded hole fit only for treason and tobacco. Being warm with the throng of the playhouse I unadvisedly threw off my wig; the rawness of this cursed place, with the coldness of our tipples has seized upon me so violently that I'm afraid I shan't recover it in a trice. I have got such a pain in my jaws that I shan't be able to eat a bit. So now, madam, I must either live upon love or starve. For Heaven's sake then, dear madam, send me a little subsistence, let not a hungry wretch perish for want of an alms. Your charity for the Lord's sake! Kind words is all I crave, and the most uncharitable prelate will afford a beggar his blessing. Pity my conditions, fair charmer, I have got a cold without and a fire within. Love and cyder do not agree, so I'll have no more cellars.

If you don't send me some comfort in my afflictions expect to have a note to this *purpose*—Be pleased to accompany the corps of an unfortunate lover who dyed of an aching chops and a broken heart.

Your strange and unexpected declaration of your unkind thoughts of me has cast a damp upon my spirits that will break out either in

melancholy or rage ; I wish it prove the latter, for then I shall destroy myself the shorter way, in the fervency of my passion and diligence of courtship which has alarmed part of the world.

To be accused of coldness and neglect is—but I'll say no more upon that subject, 'tis too warm ; and if I touch it will set me ablaze. I remember the cause of my uneasiness t'other day, and I remember that cause was repeated last night ; and in short I remember a thousand things that make me mad ; and since you have taken so opportune a time of telling me of the coldness of my love, give me leave to tell you that my passion is so violent that 'twill give me cause to curse your whole sex ; nay, even you, tho' at the same time I could stab myself for the expression. Now, madam, I'll endeavour to sleep, for I han't closed my eyes since I saw you.

Why should I write to my dearest Penelope when I only trouble her with reading what she won't believe ? I have told my passion, my eyes have spoke it, my tongue pronounced it, and my pen declared it ; I have sighed it, swore it, and subscribed it, now my heart is full of you, my head raves of you and my hand writes to you but all in vain.

If you think me a dissembler, use me generously like a villain and discard me for ever ; but

if you will be so just to my passion as to believe it sincere, tell me so, and make me happy; 'tis but justice, madam, to do one or t'other.

Your indisposition last night when I left you put me into such disorder, that not finding a coach I pushed my way, and never minded whither I wandered till I found myself close by *Tyburn*. When blind love guides, who can forbear going astray? Instead of laughing at myself I fell to pitying poor Mr F——r who, whilst he roved abroad among your whole sex was never out of his way; and now, by a single she was led to the gallows. From the thoughts of hanging I naturally entered upon those of matrimony. I considered how many gentlemen have taken a handsome swing, to avoid some inward disquiets; then why should not I hazard the noose to ease me of my torment. Then I considered whether I should send for the ordinary of *Newgate* or the parson of *St Ann's*, but considering myself better prepared for dying in a fair lady's arms than on the three-legged tree, I was the most inclinable to the parish priest; besides, if I died in a fair lady's arms I should be sure of Christian burial at last, and should have the most beautiful tomb in the universe.

You may imagine, madam, that these thoughts of mortality were very melancholy; but who

cou'd avoid the thoughts of death when you were sick? And if your health be not dearer to me than my own, may the next news I hear be your death which wou'd be as great a hell as your life and welfare is a heaven to the most amorous of his sex.

Pray let me know in a line whether you are better or worse, whether I am honest or a knave, and whether I shall live or die.

MADAM,—'Tis a sad misfortune to begin a letter with an *Adieu!* but when my love is crossed 'tis no wonder that my writing should be reversed. I would beg your pardon for the other offences of this nature which I have committed but that I have so little reason to judge favourably of your mercy, tho' I can assure you, madam, that I shall never excuse myself my own share of the trouble, no more than I can pardon myself the vanity of attempting your charms so much above the reach of my pretensions, and which are reserved for some worthy admirers. If there be that man upon earth that can merit your esteem, I pity him; for an obligation too great for a return must to any generous soul be very uneasy; tho' still I envy his misery.

May you be as happy, madam, in the enjoy-

ment of your desires as I am miserable in the disappointment of mine; and as the greatest blessing of your life may the person you admire love you as sincerely and as passionately as he whom you scorn.

To a lady whom he never saw, being a true relation of a Saturday night's adventure—

I have now, madam, had time to reflect on *Saturday* night's adventure; and if I have reflected on anything else since that may I never be blest with such an adventure again.

A lady in a masque with a pretty hand that presently gets hold of my heart, desires to know where she shall see me after the play. 'At the *Rose*, madam,' said I. There the lady calls like a woman of honour, where I was found like a man of honour and without much ceremony leave three honest gentlemen and two roasted fowls to venture myself, neck and gizzard with two strange ladies in a coach. Compliments (which, by the way, were pretty plain on my side) being passed on both sides, the ladies would do nothing under the *Rose*, but must drive to the *Fountain* in the *Strand*. If the ladies had informed me of their quality, I had called for Burgundy; but seeing

nothing about them that promised beyond *Covent Garden*, I thought a bottle of new *French* might be suitable. They both were in love with me; but one a little farther gone than t'other; their discourse was modest, and they drank like women of quality, for one bottle was soon out.

I was then impatient to return to my fowls; for I could not feed upon covered dishes. The lady that was most in love with me promised to take off her mask if I should see her home. I promised to wait on her home if she would let me . . . I was a blockhead for that; for the lady was angry, not with the matter, but the manner of the expression; but I, thinking still of *Covent Garden*, was not so very nice in my phrase; but at last away they drove and set down one lady the Lord knows where. The t'other (relying, I suppose, more upon my modesty than her own) had the courage to stay alone with me in the coach, which after several turnings stop'd, where we lighted, in *Golden Square*. She advised me to make the coach wait, which I thought a very good hint to discharge it.

She conducted me up-stairs to a very *stately apartment*, and she, according to her promise, took off her mask, but pull'd her hood so about her face that I was as far to seek for her beauty as before.

After some foolish chat in comes a maid with a red hot warming pan and retires into a bed-chamber, and returning presently told her lady that her ladyship's bed was ready, and dropt a modest curtesie, and made her *exit*; the lady told me. . . .

Our conversation was free, natural, and pleasant, till ten o'clock next morning; the chamber was so dark that I could not see the lady's face, so was forced to depart as great a stranger to that as when I first met her; tho' I knew every other part about her so well that I shall never forget her. I hope your ladyship will pardon my familiarity; for, by heavens, I can no more forbear whispering my past joys to myself, than I could abstain repeating them with you, would you bless me with a second opportunity. I have sent you a note for the pit, to see the Jubilee tomorrow, tho' I would rather try the power of my love by finding you out in the front boxes. I am sure you can't be handsome; for nature never made anything entirely perfect. In short, if I can't find you out by instinct, never trust me, when I say more, which must be as great a curse, as you never will prove a blessing to, MADAM,—Your most humble servant,

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

To Mrs C.

MADAM,—I am got to the *Rose* whence I send to know how my dear is. Bless me with a line my dear. If I durst, I would visit you.

'Tis a cold frosty night,
My desires are warm,
My love makes a fire
To keep me from harm.
But should you prove cruel,
And your favours withhold,
My fire goes out
For want of its fuel,
And I, poor I, must perish with cold.

So much for rhyme, now for reason. I love you, my dear, and I have a thousand reasons for it, and if you don't believe me, by heaven, you wrong the faithfulest man on earth.

Pray madam don't put me to the expence of vows and oaths, I hate swearing under my hand. I love you in plain downright terms. But what sort of love I can't tell you till I have the honour and happiness of seeing and conversing with you once more.

You have art enough to engage my friendship and beauty enough to engage my love, you shall make a friend of me and I'll aspire to make a mistress of you, but if you will bless me with the

knowledge of time and place of waiting on you,
 you shall make a friend, lover, fool or what you
 please of, MADAM,—Your Admirer,

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

MADAM,—You were engaged with wits last
 night, madam, that an honest man could not be
 happy, and I am so engaged with wits now that
 I can't write sense.

I am very uneasie and I don't know for what.
 I can drink no health that can restore my cure.
 I am stupid and lifeless, for my love is where—
 G—— D——. Madam —— I wish I had never
 seen you. You made a turn in the —— to-night
 that has chang'd the scene of my happiness—now
 'tis out—and I good company again. Sir, my
 humble service to you, and I am this lady's most
 humble servant,

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

MADAM,—When I left you, my dear, I went
 to the play, from thence to wit and wine which
 detained me till four this morning, then I went to
 bed and dreamt of her whose health I came from
 drinking. 'Twas yours, by gad.

Now, madam, I have given you an account of

my mis-spent hours, for such I must reckon those that I throw away in any company but yours ; but love and fortune cannot be reconciled. They are both blind, and therefore can never meet, but you and I can see for we love one another. I'll answer for you and you shall do the same for me. Witness my hand,

GEORGE FARQUHAR.

MADAM—'Tis a hard case that you should disturb a man of his natural rest at this rate. If I have slept one wink to-night may I sleep to all eternity. The very thoughts of you made me wakeful, as if I had had your dear self in my arms ! Zounds, madam, what d'ye mean ? Consider I am a man ; a mortal, wasting, amorous man.

My heart is wax, your eyes are fire,
You are all charms, and I all o'er desire,
I'm start staring mad
In mind be gad.
To-day I languish with sorrow.
But since I can't crown it,
I'll drink till I drown it,
And make myself well by to-morrow.

Madam, I am, your most — what you please
by *Jove*.

TO A MASQUE ON TWELF-DAY.

To be a man and honourable, you'll say, madam, are contradictions. But to be a man and not curious were a greater contradiction. Now, madam, amidst all these contradictions I'll say one thing *very reasonably*. Your *letter* is very *witty*; you may be very handsome, and I have a mistress already; she has charms enough to secure my heart hitherto, but can't well tell whether they are of force to maintain their ground against yours.

If you think the *victory* worth the trouble, 'twill be the best way to take a garrison possess't by so powerful an *enemy*. You may at last* come and view the fortifications, and if you be an engineer worth a farthing, you may presently guess whether the fort be impregnable or not.

Though this be the last day of *Christmas*, it may prove the first of my *Jubilee*, if ever your ladship please to honour me with your commands where I shall wait on you.—I am, MADAM,
Your most humble servant,

WILDAIR.†

**Sic* † least.

† The hero of a comedy so called by Farquhar.

You may be assured, *Astrea*, that neither grief nor love will break the heart of any man, since neither of them has killed me, tho' I have been forced to be two days without the honour of seeing you.

When I parted from you to begin this tedious separation, I remember you promised me a letter, the expectation of which was a comfort to me in my absence: but when I came to town this morning, and found none—if ever you saw or could fancy a man wild with despair, just such a thing was I. The mildest of my thoughts was that I was forgotten and deservedly slighted; that something of disadvantage to me had occur'd since I saw you, and that somebody—I don't know who—has been doing—I don't know what—to ruine me in your esteem; for you are in your nature generous, and a strict observer of your word. Sure, therefore, it must be something extraordinary that could provoke you to be at once both unkind and unjust to—Yours

CELADON.

P.S.—I would have wrote more but I find myself in a trembling disorder, as you may perceive by my manner of writing, which I can no more give an account of, than you can, why you

are pleased to admit of letters from—Your humble servant.

Mrs C——LL's *Answer*

I can guess (without the help of a conjurer) at *Celadon's* disease: the thimble upon the seal of your letter assures me your trembling was caused by some female spright. I can't find in my heart to pity you, since 'tis a malady you voluntarily drew upon yourself. But let me caution you by the way, don't affect it too *frequently*, lest the *angry God* should make you feel his power in *reality*. I find we both lay under a mistake; you expected a letter yesterday and I a visit. I would not stir abroad nor was I good company at home. I was as much out of humour at my disappointment as if I had been really in love with you.

I know not what sort of lethargy has seized me, but 'tis the opinion of all but myself that I am inclining to that *folly*.

But I am resolved to pray hard against it; and if the devil be but so much my friend, to keep you out of my sight for four and twenty hours, I am certain I shall be out of danger,—
Adieu.

ASTREA.

Celadon to Mrs C——ll, in answer to a copy
of verses she sent him.

Madam, by making such a pother
Of being tost this way and t'other
Methinks 'tis plain you want a rudder,
Which if my counsel might prevail
You'd get, and fasten to your tail
The next time you resolve to sail.
Then you'd not fear a storm or quicksand,
When once your ladship is mann'd.
And should you touch my rock of wit
Why should you be afraid of it?
For I shall sink and you shall split.
(But to descend to phrase of land
And speak what both may understand)
You say you ventured a surprise
And went much wounded from my eyes.
And when recover'd and grown better,
There came a parlous witty letter,
Which bound your heart fast as with fetter.
Madam, all women must submit
To my joint force of eyes and wit.
Where e'er I come I make sure slaughter,
But were you dead, dead as dish-water,
I have a cordial infection,
Will cause a speedy resurrection,
A blessed medicine, ne'er failing
Those that, like you, are giv'n to sailing.
Three doses does it, sometimes more,
According as I am in store.
But should it fail, pray what of that?
Tho' I have kill'd you like a cat,
As I shall find, e'er I have done,
You have, alas, more lives than one.
But one thing more, and I have ended:
Your two last lines have much offended,

You seem unkindly to suspect
I should my glorious prize neglect ;
Or else mis-use the pow'r you gave,
And frown ungently on my slave.
But, did you know your man throughout
You'd be ashamed of such a doubt ;
For I'm as merciful as stout.

No more poetry I beseech you, 'tis too changeable a way of writing to be pleasant to a man that's forced to hire ; so unlucky am I too at this juncture that my hackney's at grass, which must serve both for a reason why your answer has been delayed so long, and for the faintness of his performance.

Give me leave to tell you with as much good manners as I can that not one of those fine sayings you would flatter your humble servant with, sits easy on him. They become him as ill as the Jubilee Beau's cloaths do a porter, or as fine trappings would an ass. Let me intreat you therefore to believe that I know my self, and can't bear to be laugh'd at by one I would make my friend. Immoderate, undeserv'd praises are the severest lampoons ; and you must have a very mean opinion of him you give 'em to, if you think he'll take 'em ; let example instruct you, I check my pen when I find it inclines to any thing that can be wrested to a compliment, tho' all I could say would be less than you truly deserve.

Oblige me with more truth and less wit as you value the friendship and conversations of your humble admirer,

CELADON.

P.S.—Send me word if I may have leave to visit to-morrow.

Mrs C——LL's *Answer*.

I was just concluding our acquaintance was at an end, when I perceived a porter make up boldly to the door, and saluting it with three swinging blows, which signified he came in haste, and had matter of importance to deliver. The door being opened immediately he produced his authority, your letter, which I had no sooner open'd but I perceived by your poetry you sent him on a speedy message, suspecting I had met with ill weather and ran you adrift and might want a pilot to bring me safe in port. But I can't help telling you I am not so ill a mathematician (tho' a woman) but I know how to steer my course, and where to cast anchor too. I guess our acquaintance will be but of a short longitude, if your *Pegasus* take such a latitude as his stile. I am sorry you misunderstand my intent, which was only to divert you over a

bottle, and myself from the spleen. I never had the least design of coming to any particulars, and I'm as little concerned to know if you are courageous as whether you are merciful or not, for I'll assure you my condition is not so desperate as you may imagine.

Raillery is allowable from woman sometimes, as well as from your sex. If I remember *Truth* and *Sincerity* (which ought to be cloath'd in *Modesty*) were the principles you profess'd and seem'd to defend. But I find those are points as far out of a *lawyer's* way as good manners from a *Dutchman*, especially a *Templer's*. Therefore I fear I must be forced to remove my cause into another court, or withdraw my action into *statu quo*; for this declaration of yours has put a demur to my former resolves.

You desire me to write truth; it is the only good quality I pretend to. *Wit* was never my talent, which you are not insensible of, and makes you use me so *freely*. I hope you will not condemn this, for I think there is nothing like a compliment in the whole scrawl. Take it as you please from

ASTREA.

P.S.—I must see your answer e'er I know whether I shall give you leave to visit me or not.

CELADON TO MRS C——LL.

MADAM.—Your passion becomes you well enough ; the little heat you have put yourself into with the bare apprehension of an affront, gives you more than ordinary brightness, which shines to advantage in an air of resentment throughout your letter. But if you would have thought it worth your while to have read mine twice or indulg'd in the *liberty* you allow'd all mankind, and which you are not ashamed to make use of yourself sometimes, of *rallying* I mean, you would not have found so much subject for *satyr* as upon a rash cursory view you did, when you condemn'd me for a fault I never intended to be guilty of. No, I assure you 'twas the farthest from my thoughts. Believe me, I judge myself in this point as nicely as you can do, and could I convict myself of any indecency; either in language or carriage to a woman, I'd punish myself with a *severity* which you in your justice could not but approve of, and resolve never to see the face of a woman again. Self-denial I would not practise upon any other consideration than a crime I could never forgive myself, and which I should think I could never do or suffer enough torture for. 'Tis strange to me that you who have so good a relish should let yourself fall into a mistake, and not

discern that whatsoever ill face my poetry might carry with it it was innocent at bottom ; nay, in truth 'twas but what you drew me into, so that if there was a greater latitude taken than ought to have been (which I vow I don't remember, and have no copy to recollect by) I don't know how you'll acquit the lady that wrote verses to me first. If she had kept back the cause the effect had not been. Moderate, therefore, your reproaches, be friends with me, and fall out with yourself. Keep me to prose and there's not a man moderater and more nicely observes the *decorums* ladies ought to be treated with ; but when I am forced to make room for a *muse* in my breast, I am possest ; you have seen that the very being of the female kind so near me has an influence upon me extraordinarily, it shall be my care therefore not to lose by my *muse* what I gain by my fortune.

Certainly you have been very ill-used by some of the gown which provokes you to condemn us all for monsters, creatures void both of good morals and common civility.

I have very little to say for myself ; but if you'll give me leave I'll shew you the face of a man shall be an instance that they are not all past the grace of repenting, and reforming too, by the silent reproof of others' good works.

I dreamt of you all night, and in spite of your rigour I had you in my arms, it is impossible to describe the extasie, 'twould be too transporting to be reveal'd by,—

CELADON.

MRS C——LL's *Answer*.

If your dreams be so pleasant enjoy them still, they are the most certain pleasures, all others are transitory and subject to change ; a thousand things may occur to make us *unhappy* should we indulge the *folly* of love. I will not insert the particulars the better to disarm your defence ; for one of your profession knows how to defend a bad cause as well as a good one. Besides I cannot expect more plausible answers than you have given me already. Nay, I am inclinable to believe you above the common level of mankind, which makes me deal more *sincerely* with you than with the *generality* of your sex ; therefore let me dissuade you from the pursuit of what if *really* obtained would not be worth your care.

If you have discovered any little whim in my humour that agrees with yours (for no woman but is mistress of some charm in some *eyes*) think at the same time that that is not enough to engage the heart of *Celadon* ; think that I have

a thousand unanswerable faults in t'other scale. Whatever your imagination shews you in favour of me turn but the perspective* and it will shew you more to the contrary. As for example: fancy me all that's ill; think me (for aught you know I may be) a mistress easie to be *enjoyed*, one that may be bought with sordid *gold* when the most nice *rhetorick* fails to move. Think me this, I say, then ask yourself if you still love *Astrea*. Perhaps you'll say this is an odd letter; but no matter, I hope you'll never have cause to tax me with deceit, nor think me vain when I say I have as true a notion of *honour* as your sex can have, and when I see a man deserves it I can use him so, if *Celadon* pleases to continue our correspondence by writing; but I never must see him more.

CELADON TO MRS C——LL.

Never see my dear *Astrea* more! If my eyes are the subject of your aversion, by all that's good to have you in my arms I'd pluck them out. There is not anything so dear to me, nothing can, I think, except yourself, be dearer to me than my

* A telescope formerly,
 You hold the glass, but turn the *perspective*
 And farther off the lessen'd object drive.—*Dryden*.

eyes, but I would renounce 'em to purchase *a felicity* which only you can raise me to.

Be everything that you have named to fright me, be worse, be common, be rotten, false, designing, be nothing but what is base and infamous. I will not stop in my pursuit, but be content to share infection with you, might I but taste those ravishing *enjoyments* which you and none but you can give, and have my portion of those charming things your mind produces.

Good God! what have I been saying of a woman that comes nearest to perfection of any of her sex, and contains more virtues in her than a whole convent does.

Everything you do or say is a charm to me, your very anger has a *beauty* in't as you express it, and like a gentle wind it more increases than abates my fire.

Reverse your cruel sentence, I beseech you, madam, and suffer me to visit you. You know you can command my strongest passions with a look and *easily* disarm me of my most violent resolutions. I love too much to dare to be your servant, &c.

DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

1722

JOHN CHURCHILL, first Duke of Marlborough, who was noted for his personal beauty and charm of manner, has achieved a lasting reputation as one of the greatest military commanders of the past century. Although in early life he was not strictly virtuous, yet his amatory adventures came to a speedy conclusion. He fell in love with Sarah, daughter of Richard Jennings of Sandridge, near St Albans. She acted as an attendant in the household of Mary of Modena, the second Duchess of York, upon her step-daughter, the Princess Anne.

But Churchill's courtship was carried on with difficulty, especially as his lady-love was coy and quick-tempered. His parents, too, objected to the engagement, desirous that he should make a wealthier marriage; whereupon Sarah Jennings

his 'dearest soul' threatened to break off, and in order to prevent his furthering his suit, spoke of joining her sister, the Countess of Hamilton, in Paris.

This produced so effective a remonstrance from her lover that they were married early in the year 1678, the courtship having commenced some two years previously. The marriage was at first only known to the Duchess of York, but in the same summer they were reconciled to his parents.

From the letters quoted below, it will be seen that Churchill's love for his wife was very deep, and the fear of displeasing her is occasionally mentioned in such passages as this—'I am never so happy as when I think you are kind.'

In a letter dated from the Hague, April 20, 1703, he thus writes:—'I received this morning two of your dear letters, which I read with all the pleasure imaginable. They were so very kind that, if it were possible, you are dearer to me ten thousand times than you ever were. I am so entirely yours, that if I might have all the world given me, I could not be happy but in your love.'

Another dated from the Hague, April 23, 1706, is as follows:—'I am very uneasy at not having heard from you since my being in this

country; and the wind continuing in the east, I am afraid I shall not have the satisfaction of receiving any letter from my dearest soul before I leave this place. . .

‘My dearest soul, my desire of being with you is so great, that I am not able to express the impatience I am in to have this campaign over. I pray God it may so happen that there be no more occasion of my coming, but that I may ever stay with you, my dearest soul.’

A few days later on he acknowledges her letters.

‘I am to thank you for three letters, which I received yesterday morning, and for your kind expressions, which I do return with a sincere heart full of love for my dearest soul, and at the same time assure you that during the remainder of my life I shall be careful in doing everything that may oblige you.

‘I hope you may forget whatever I may have said or done that might have made you uneasy, for my whole thoughts are bent on the being happy with you. . .’

His prolonged absence seems to have naturally caused him a great deal of anxiety, as may be gathered from the subjoined extract:—

‘It is impossible for my dearest soul to imagine the weary thoughts I have every day in thinking

that I have the curse, at my age, of being in a foreign country from you, and at the same time very little prospect of being able to do any considerable service for my country or the common cause.'

Amidst his voluminous correspondence written from various stations abroad, we find repeated, over and over again, these charming evidences of his longing desire to see his wife. Whatever the occasion, she was continually in his thoughts.

WILLIAM CONGREVE

1728

A THOROUGH man of pleasure, moving in the best society of wit and fashion, William Congreve lived his life. He was celebrated, says Leigh Hunt, for his *bonnes fortunes*, and was always in tender connexion with some reigning charmer. At one time it is Mrs Arabella Hunt, a public singer; at another he is residing in the same house with 'Madame Berenger'; at another and for a longer while, his relations with Mrs Bracegirdle, whose very name, according to Leigh Hunt, sounds like a Venus, were, says Mr Leslie Stephen 'ambiguous, but in any case very intimate.' During the last years of his life he was the cherished companion of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough.

Mrs Bracegirdle not only acted the heroine

in every one of his plays, his *Angelica*, in 'Love for Love,' his *Almeria*, in the 'Mourning Bride,' his *Millamant*, in 'The Way of the World,' but always spoke either a prologue or an epilogue to it. And what plays they were! What opportunities they gave for sensational display! With what richness of words were they adorned! The famous description of the cathedral in the 'Mourning Bride' (ii. 1) was always maintained by Johnson to be superior to anything written by Shakespeare, and to contain lines unequalled in English poetry.

Few letters are to be found addressed to Congreve by any of the ladies he favoured with his love. A poetic effusion however composed by Lady Mary Wortley Montague still survives. It is inserted in this book under that lady's name.

The most generally known affair of the heart of this celebrated dramatist was with Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, to whom, says Dr Johnson, he left ten thousand pounds, for reasons either not known or not mentioned. Henrietta erected for him a splendid tomb in Westminster Abbey, and is reported, with how much truth is uncertain, to have had a puppet constructed either of wax or of ivory, for in this important particular authorities differ, which she dressed in his clothes and caused to be placed in a chair by her

side when she supped, and treated for an imaginary disease on its leg.

Unfortunately for the public, none of his epistles to this lady or of hers to him have come down to us, but there is a very neat little love letter written by him to Mrs Arabella Hunt. It scarcely reminds us by its style of his 'Mourning Bride,' nor does his 'Irregular Ode on her singing' nearly approach that lauded composition. When Arabella died Congreve composed this epigram, *written after the decease of Mrs Arabella Hunt, under her picture drawn playing on a lute—*

Were there on earth another voice like thine,
 Another hand so blest with skill divine,
 The late afflicted world some hopes might have,
 And harmony retrieve thee from the grave.

TO MRS ARABELLA HUNT, at Windsor.

ANGEL—There can be no stronger motive to bring me to *Epsom** or to the north of *Scotland* or to *Paradise* than you being in any of those places; for you make every place alike heavenly wherever you are. And I believe if anything could cure me of a natural infirmity, seeing and hearing you would be the secret remedy; at least

* Where the lady was staying.

I should forget that I had anything to complain of, while I had much more reason to rejoice.

I should certainly, had I been at my own disposal have taken post for *Epsom*, upon receipt of your letter, but I have a nurse here who has dominion over me, a most unmerciful *she-ass*. Balaam was allowed an *angel* to his *ass*: I'll pray, if that will do any good, for the same grace—I would have set out upon my *ass*, and have waited upon you, but I was afraid I should have been a tedious while in coming, having great experience of the slowness of that beast, for you must know that I am making my journey towards health upon that animal, and I find I make such slow advances that I despair of arriving at you or any other blessing till I am capable of using some more expeditious means.

I could tell you of a great inducement to bring you to *this* place, but I am sworn to *secrecy*; however if you were *here*, I would contrive to make you one of the *party*. I'll expect you, as a good Christian may everything that he devoutly prays for, I am, MADAM, Your everlasting adorer,

W. CONGREVE.

Some verses which he wrote to her about her singing, and called 'An Irregular Ode,' run thus—

Let all be hush't, each softest motion cease,
 Be every loud tumultuous thought at peace,
 And every ruder gasp of *breath*,
 Be calm, as in the *arms* of death.
 And thou most fickle, most uneasie part,
 Thou restless wanderer, my heart,
 Be still ; gently, oh gently, leave,
 Thou busie idle thing to heave.
 Stir not a pulse, and let my *blood*
 That turbulent unruly flood,
 Be softly staid :
 Let me be all but my attention, dead,
 So rest, unnecessary springs of life,
 Leave your officious toil and strife ;
 For I would hear her voice, and try
 If it be possible, to die !

Three stanzas follow in the same strain ; the last is—

See how they crowd, see how the little cherubs skip
 While others sit around her mouth, and sip
 Sweet halleluiahs from her lip.
 Those lips where in surprise of bliss they rove,
 For ne'er before did angels taste
 So exquisite a feast
 Of musick and of love.
 Prepare then, ye immortal choir,
 Each sacred minstrel tune his lyre,
 And with her voice in chorus join,
 Her voice, which next to yours, is most divine.
 Bless the glad earth, with heav'nly lays,
 And to that pitch th' eternal *accents* raise,

Which only *breath* inspired can reach,
 To notes which only she can learn, and you can teach :
 While we charm'd with the lov'd excess,
 Are wrap't in sweet forgetfulness
 Of all, of all but of the present happiness :
 Wishing for ever in that state to lie,
 For ever to be dying so, yet never die.

DEAR MADAM,—Not believe that I love you ?
 You cannot pretend to be so incredulous. If you
 do not believe my tongue, consult my eyes, con-
 sult your own. You will find by yours that they
 have charms ; by mine that I have a heart which
 feels them. Recal to mind what happened last
 night. That at least was a lover's kiss. Its
 eagerness, its fierceness, its warmth, expressed
 the God its parent. But oh ! its sweetness, and
 its melting softness expressed him more. With
 trembling in my limbs, and fevers in my soul I
 ravish'd it. Convulsions, pantings, murmurings
 shew'd the mighty disorder within me : the mighty
 disorder increased by it. For those dear lips shot
 through my heart, and thro' my bleeding vitals,
 delicious poison, and an avoidless but yet a
 charming ruin.

What cannot a day produce ? The night
 before I thought myself a happy man, in want of
 nothing, and in fairest expectation of fortune ;
 approved of by men of wit, and applauded by

others. Pleased, nay charmed with my friends, my then dearest friends, sensible of every delicate pleasure, and in their turns possessing all.

But Love, almighty Love, seems in a moment to have removed me to a prodigious distance from every object but you alone. In the midst of crowds I remain in solitude. Nothing but you can lay hold of my mind, and that can lay hold of nothing but you. I appear transported to some foreign desert with you (oh, that I were really thus transported!), where, abundantly supplied with everything, in thee, I might live out an age of uninterrupted extasy.

The scene of the world's great stage seems suddenly and sadly chang'd. Unlovely objects are all around me, excepting thee; the charms of all the world appear to be translated to thee. Thus in this said * but oh, too pleasing state! my soul can fix upon nothing but thee; thee it contemplates, admires, adores, nay depends on, trusts on you alone.

If you and hope forsake it, despair and endless misery attend it.

DEAR MADAM,—This I send by the permission of a severe father, I will not say a cruel one, since

* sic. ? sad.

he is yours. What is it that he has taken so mortally ill of me? That I die for his daughter is my only offence. And yet he has refused to let me take ev'n my farewell of you. Thrice happy be the omen! May I never take my farewell of thee till my soul takes leave of my body; at least he cannot restrain me from loving, no, I will love thee in spite of all opposition.

Tho' your friends and mine prove equally averse, yet I will love thee with a constancy which shall appear to all the world to have something noble in it, that all the world shall confess that it deserved not to be unfortunate.

I will forsake even my friends for thee, my honest, my witty, my brave friends, who had always been, till I had seen thee, the dearest part of mankind to me. Thou shalt supply the place of them all with me; thou shalt be my bosom, my best-lov'd friend, and at the same time my only mistress and my dearest wife.

Have the goodness to pardon this familiarity, 'tis the tenderest leave of the faithfulest lover, and here to show an over respectfulness would be to wrong my passion. That I love thee more than life, nay, even than glory, which I once courted with a burning desire, bear witness all my unquiet days, and every restless night, and that terrible agitation of mind and body which

proceeded from my fear of losing thee. To lose thee is to lose all happiness; tormenting reflection to a sensible soul! How often has my reason been going upon it? But the sons* of reason would be but too happy upon the loss of thee, since all the advantage that I could draw from its presence would be to know myself miserable.

But the time calls upon me; I am obliged to take an odious journey, and leave thee behind with my enemies. But thine shall never do thee harm with me. Adieu, thou dearest, thou loveliest of creatures! No change of time or place, or the remonstrances of the best of friends, shall ever be able to alter my passion for thee. Be but one quarter so kind, so just to me, and the sun will not shine on a happier man than myself.

DEAR MADAM,—May I presume to beg pardon for the fault I committed. So foolish a fault that it was below not only a man of sense but a man; and of which nothing could ever have made me guilty but the fury of a passion with which none but your lovely self could inspire me. May I presume to beg pardon for a fault which I can never forgive myself? To purchase that pardon

* *sic.* ?loss.

what would I not endure? You shall see me prostrate before you, and use me like a slave while I kiss the dear feet that trample upon me. But if my crime be too great for forgiveness, as indeed it is very great, deny me not one dear parting look, let me see you once before I must never see you more.

Christ! I want patience to support that accursed thought, I have nothing in the world that is dear to me but you. You have made everything else indifferent; and can I resolve never to see you more? In spight of myself I must always see you. Your form is fixed by fate in my mind and is never to be remov'd. I see those lovely piercing eyes continually, I see each moment those ravishing lips which I have gazed on still with desire, and still have touch'd with transport, and at which I have so often flown with all the fury of the most violent love.

Jesus! from whence and whither am I fallen? From the hopes of blissful extasies to black despair! From the expectation of immortal transports, which none but your dear self can give me, and which none but he who loves like me could ever so much as think of, to a complication of cruel passions and the most dreadful condition of human life.

My fault indeed has been very great, and

cries aloud for the severest vengeance. See it inflicted on me : see me despair and die for that fault. But let me not die unpardon'd, madam ; I die for you, but die in the most cruel and dreadful manner. The wretch that lies broken on the wheel alive feels not a quarter of what I endure. Yet boundless love has been all my crime ; unjust, ungrateful, barbarous return for it !

Suffer me to take my eternal leave of you ; when I have done that how easy will it be to bid all the rest of the world adieu.

DEAR MADAM,—This is the third letter that I have sent you since I came hither. Those which went before it were all the overflowings of a heart more full of passion than ever was a man's before. It is impossible for me to be distant from you, but I must send to you by every occasion. And yet you can resolve to take no notice of all my tenderness.

Yes, my dearest inhuman creature, you can. You have been sick, nay dangerously sick, and have never sent to me. Have I left all the world for you and could you resolve to leave the world without me, nay, without so much as giving me the least notice of it? Could you resolve to

leave me to despair and to endless misery, without expressing the least concern for me? And can I persist in loving one so ungrateful? Is there such another ungrateful creature alive? No, there lives not so ungrateful a creature, but there lives not one so charming.

DEAR MADAM,—Can you be angry still with your poor penitent? You cannot have the ill nature sure? Yes, but you can you say, since he could have the presumption to be angry with you. But, my dearest, there is this difference betwixt your anger and mine; mine was caus'd by the cruelty of your suppos'd infidelity, and yours by the kindness of your lover's resentment, for if I had not been fond of thee to the last degree I had not been so incens'd against you. Yet even when I was most so I could sooner have pluck'd out an eye than have resolved to have parted with thee; nay, I could have sooner torn out both eyes if the loss of both would not have for ever depriv'd me of the dear, the ravishing sight of thee.

But if you still think that my anger has guilt in it and that I ought to suffer for it, the means to punish me with utmost severity and to make me my own tormentor is to tell me you love me

then I shall curse myself and my rage, and feel all the plague of remorse for having offended thee. I shall look upon myself as the basest, the most ungrateful of men for abusing thy goodness and thy charming tenderness. I shall believe that I can never humble myself enough and never suffer enough to deserve forgiveness.

Thus, madam, you have your revenge in your power. It is false modesty which restrains you from taking it. In order to it you have nothing to do but to prove yourself tender and to shew yourself grateful. If you must be ashamed, blush at your cruelty, blush at your inhumanity. But gratitude is reason and love is nature, never be ashamed of those.

Do but consider there was a time when I was happy in your esteem ; yes, there has been a time in which I was thought not altogether void of reason by you ; how then can you blush at the owning a passion which you can command with an absolute sway at the very time that it tyrannizes over me.

DEAR MADAM,—My friend's stratagem gave me an opportunity of seeing you by finding fault with you. It must proceed from design or madness if I find fault with thee. Thy lovely face is

the very same that set all my blood in a flame, and I am sure my heart can never be altered. How it trembled in my breast when I saw you last, and by its trouble confessed its conqueror! How it has burnt ever since with redoubled fury! When I shall be free from this flame Heav'n only knows, for the hour of my death Heav'n only knows. 'Tis a flame that has incorporated with that of my life, and both will go out together.

In vain I invoke my reason to resist my senses. My reason finds you more lovely than my eyes did before, shews me all the graces of thy beauteous mind, and grows pleased and proud itself in its own captivity.

You accuse me, they say, of some extraordinary crime; a crime against whom? against you whom I love! Against you for whom I could die! Strange accusation! Yet at the same time you refuse to see me, you refuse to see my letters, and must I be condemned unheard? Robbers are allowed to speak before they are sentenced. Murderers have the privilege to plead for their lives, and shall the tenderest love be denied the privilege which is granted to the blackest malice?

I have been guilty of nothing but too much love, if too much love be a fault. Why have you given credit to my enemies, before you have

heard me? I may indeed be convinced of an error, but I can never be convicted of a crime against you. The man must be mad, nay, desperately mad, who can design to injure himself, and thou art by much the better, the dearer part of me.

Give me leave to see you once more before I depart, let me see once more that face which has undone me, yet charms me even in ruin.

O face, industriously contriv'd by Heaven,
To fix my eyes and captivate my soul!

Nay, I will see you if it be but to upbraid you with your barbarous wish. If at the time that you made it you had struck a dagger in my heart, you had given it a gentler wound.

The only wish that I have to make is to be happy in thee. If that succeeds not, I have another, and that is to lie at rest in my grave.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

1729

THE correspondence of Dick Steele with his 'Dear Prue' is one of the most voluminous of its kind that has ever been published, embracing upwards of 400 letters. These, as Mr Forster has observed, are 'such masterpieces of ardour and respect, of tender passion and honest feeling, of good sense and earnestness as well as of playful sweetness, that the lady may be fairly forgiven for having so soon surrendered.' The lady to whom they are addressed was Mary Scurlock, who, it is generally said, was at first averse to all ideas of marriage, but quickly yielded after a month's wooing, accepting for her husband a man who, to use the phrase she afterwards applied to him, 'was as agreeable and pleasant as any in England.' Nevertheless, somewhat shy at his sudden conquest over her, she erased the dates of

their letters, that in showing them to a friend it might not appear she was so rapidly won. Once accepted, his letters are incessant. He writes to her every hour, as he thinks of her every moment of the day. He cannot read his books, he cannot see his friends for thinking of her. She appears to have been possessed of many admirable qualities, which her husband, after they had been united upwards of seven years, celebrated in a dedicatory address in the 'Lady's Library,' with all the warmth of a lover. He dwells upon her wit and beauty, and the worldly sacrifices she has made in accepting his hand! Yet he often humorously chides her in his letters for what he seemed to consider her too great regard for money, though that disposition may have been forced upon her, at least heightened, by the unhappily too habitual extravagance of her husband, whose faults in that way, with the candour and self-criticism for which he was remarkable, no one more readily admitted and regretted than himself.*

At the time of the engagement he seems to have shared Addison's lodgings, stealing every conceivable opportunity, when his friend is in the next room, of telling 'the charmer of his soul that he is only and passionately hers.' At

* Montgomery's 'Memoirs of Sir Richard Steele,' 1865, I, 77.

the time of her marriage, Mary Scurlock was about eight or nine-and-twenty, and in the correspondence previous to that event she is styled, according to the custom of the period, 'Mrs,' though a single lady—the term 'Miss' having been considered derogatory to persons of mature age.

The last few days before the wedding were, we are told, intolerable to everyone except Steele himself. To quote Mr Forster's words, 'If he calls at a friend's house, he must borrow the means of writing to her. If he is at a coffee-house the waiter is despatched to her. If a Minister at his office asks him what news from Lisbon he answers, "She is exquisitely handsome." If Mr Elliott desires at the St James's to know when he has been last at Hampton Court, he replies, "It will be Tuesday come se'ennight." For the happy day was fixed at last; and on Tuesday come se'ennight, the 9th of September, 1707, the adorable Molly Scurlock became Mrs Richard Steele. For some time the marriage was kept secret, although Steele seems to have urged strongly on his wife, the open acknowledgment of him as her husband.

Among the letters addressed to his future wife by Steele, we may quote the following, which have an additional interest when it is

remembered that they were much admired by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who regarded them as models.

[August 11,] 1707.

MADAM,—I writ you on Saturday by Mrs Warren, and give you this trouble to urge the same request I made then ; which was, that I may be admitted to wait upon you. I should be very far from desiring this if it were a transgression of the most severe rules to allow it. I know you are very much above the little arts which are frequent in your sex, of giving unnecessary torment to their admirers ; therefore hope you will do so much justice to the generous passion I have for you, as to let me have an opportunity of acquainting you upon what motives I pretend to your good opinion. I shall not trouble you with my sentiments till I know how they will be received ; and as I know no reason why the difference of sex should make our language to each other differ from the ordinary rules of right reason, I shall affect plainness and sincerity in my discourse to you, as much as other lovers do perplexity and rapture. Instead of saying, ' I shall die for you,' I profess I should be glad to lead my life with you. You are as beautiful, as witty, as prudent, and as good-humoured as any woman

breathing ; but I must confess to you, I regard all these excellences as you will be pleased to direct them for my happiness or misery.

With me, madam, the only lasting motive to love is the hope of its becoming mature. I beg of you to let Mrs Warren send me word when I may attend you. I promise you I will talk of nothing but indifferent things ; though, at the same time, I know not how I shall approach you in the tender moment of first seeing you after this declaration which has been made by, Madam, your most obedient and most faithful humble servant,

RICHARD STEELE.

Three days afterwards we find him writing again, his request having been granted.

[August 14,] 1707.

MADAM,—I came to your house this night to wait on you ; but you have commanded me to expect the happiness of seeing you at another time of more leisure. I am now under your own roof while I write, and that imaginary satisfaction of being so near you, though not in your presence, has in it something that touches me with so tender ideas, that it is impossible for me to describe their force. All great passion makes us dumb ; and

the highest happiness, as well as the highest grief, seizes us too violently to be expressed by our words.

You are so good as to let me know I shall have the honour of seeing you when I next come here; I will live upon that expectation, and meditate on your perfections till that happy hour. The vainest woman upon earth never saw in her glass half the attractions which I view in you. Your air, your shape, your every glance, motion, and gesture, have such peculiar graces, that you possess my whole soul, and I know no life, but in the hopes of your approbation. I know not what to say, but that I love you with the sincerest passion that ever entered the heart of man. I will make it the business of my life to find out means of convincing you that I prefer you to all that is pleasing on earth. I am, MADAM, Your most obedient, most faithful, humble servant,

RICHARD STEELE.

Henceforth his letters become more devoted, and are sent at lesser intervals, so anxious is he to impress upon his lady-love his intense regard for her.

MADAM,—With what language shall I address my lovely fair to acquaint her with the senti-

ments of a heart she delights to torture? I have not a minute's quiet out of your sight; and when I am with you, you use me with so much distance, that I am still in a state of absence, heightened with a view of the charms which I am denied to approach. In a word, you must give me either a fan, a mask or a glove you have worn, or I cannot live; otherwise you must expect that I'll kiss your hand, or, when I next sit by you, steal your handkerchief. You yourself are too great a bounty to be secured at once; therefore I must be prepared by degrees, lest the mighty gift distract me with joy.

Dear Miss Scurlock, I am tired with calling you by that name; therefore, say the day in which you will take that of, MADAM, Your most obedient, most devoted, humble servant,

RICH. STEELE.

A few days later on, the next two letters were forwarded to her indicating how his love kept waxing hotter every hour:—

[Thursday, Aug. 27,] 1707.

MY DEAREST CREATURE,—I beg the favour of you to let me pass this day in your company, I have contrived my business so that I have till eight at night at my disposal. I can come in a

coach, and Mrs Warren being in the way may let me in without observation. My loved creature, do not deny this request nor think I am capable of being allowed that liberty without a true sense of your goodness to me in it. Your generous condescension in all your carriage towards me shall give you a powerful and lasting influence upon the thoughts and actions of him who hopes to be, MADAM, Your most obliged and grateful husband,

RICH. STEELE.

MADAM,—It is the hardest thing in the world to be in love and yet attend to business. As for me all who speak to me find me out, and I must lock myself up or other people will do it for me.

A gentleman asked me this morning, 'What news from Lisbon?' and I answered, 'She is exquisitely handsome.' Another desired to know when I had been last at Hampton Court. I replied, 'It will be on Tuesday come se'nnight.' Pr'ythee, allow me at least to kiss your hand before that day, that my mind may be in some composure. O love!

A thousand torments dwell about me!
Yet who would live to live without thee?

Methinks I could write a volume to you;

but all the language on earth would fail in saying how much and with what disinterested passion I am ever yours—

RICH. STEELE.

We now come to the correspondence after their marriage, and quote some of his letters addressed to her as his wife, though contrary to her wish, but he was still obliged to yield in the matter of living apart.

October 7, 1807.

MY LOVED CREATURE,—I write this only to bid you good-night and assure you of my diligence in the matter I told you of.

You may assure yourself I value you according to your merit which is saying that you have my heart by all the ties of beauty, virtue, good nature and friendship. I find by the progress I have made to-night, that I shall do my business effectually in two days' time. Write me word you are in good humour which will be the highest pleasure to your obliged husband,

RICH. STEELE.

I shall want some linen from your house tomorrow.

Another letter written on the following day is to the following effect :—

MY DEAR WIFE,—You were not, I am sure, awake so soon as I was for you and desired the blessing of God upon you. After that first duty my next is to let you know I am in good health this morning, which I know you are solicitous for. I believe it would not be amiss if, sometime this afternoon, you took a coach or chair and went to see a house next door to Lady Bulkely's, towards St James's Street which is to be let. I have a solid reason for quickening my diligence in all affairs of the world, which is, that you are my partaker in them and will make me labour more than any incitation of ambition or wealth could do. After I have implored the help of Providence I will have no motive to my actions but the love of the best creature living, to whom I am an obedient husband,

RICH. STEELE.

Ere long incidental allusions occur to his pecuniary affairs, yet in spite of his reckless conduct, he generally contrives by his frank acknowledgment of his faults and by his constant expression of affection to disarm censure.

Thus in a letter of May 5, 1708, directed from the Tennis Court Coffeehouse, he writes as follows:—

DEAR WIFE,—I hope I have done this day what will be pleasing to you; in the meantime I shall lie this night at a barber's, one Leg, over against the Devil's tavern at Charing Cross. I shall be able to confront the fools who wish me uneasy, and shall have the satisfaction to see thee cheerful and at ease.

If the printer's boy be at home send him hither, and let Mrs Todd send by the boy my night-gown, slippers, and clean linen.

You shall hear from me early in the morning.

RICH. STEELE.

TO MRS STEELE

August 12, 1708.

MADAM,—I have your letter, wherein you let me know that the little dispute we have had is far from being a trouble to you; nevertheless, I assure you, any disturbance between us is the greatest affliction to me imaginable. You talk of the judgment of the world; I shall never govern my actions by it, but by the rules of morality and right reason.

I love you better than the light of my eyes, or the life-blood in my heart; but when I have let you know that, you are also to understand that neither my sight shall be so far enchanted, nor my affection so much master of me, as to make me forget our common interest.

To attend my business as I ought, and improve my fortune, it is necessary that my time and my will should be under no direction but my own. Please give my most humble service to Mrs Binns. I write all this rather to explain my own thoughts to you, than to answer your letter distinctly. I enclose it to you that, upon second thoughts, you may see the disrespectful manner in which you treat your affectionate faithful husband,

RICHARD STEELE.

That his careless habits and loose way of living were occasionally the cause of much anxiety to his Prue is clear from the remarks he makes in his letters to her. But his tenderness and thoughtfulness, and at the same time independence, are among the most charming features of his letters. In a letter dated August 18, 1708, he writes :—

DEAR PRUE,—I have your letter, and all the great severity you complain of is, that you have

a husband who loves you better than his life, who has a great deal of troublesome business, out of which he removes the dearest thing alive—Yours faithfully, in spite of yourself,

RICH. STEELE.

Then again he writes :—

August 28, 1708.

DEAR PRUE,—The afternoon coach will bring you £10. Your letter shows you are passionately in love with me. But we must take our portion of life without repining; and I consider that good nature, added to the beautiful form God has given you, would make our happiness too great for human life.—Your most obliged husband and most humble servant,

RICH. STEELE.

A few days later on he writes most touchingly :—

September 13, 1708.

DEAR PRUE,—I write to you in obedience to what you ordered me, but there are not words to express the tenderness I have for you. Love is too harsh a word for it; but if you knew how my heart aches when you speak an unkind word to

me, and springs into joy when you smile on me, I am sure you would place your glory rather in preserving my happiness like a good wife, than tormenting me like a peevish beauty.

Good Prue, write me word you shall be overjoyed at my return to you, and pity the awkward figure I make when I pretend to resist you, by complying always with the reasonable demands of your enamoured husband,

RICH. STEELE.

May 5, 1709.

DEAR WIFE,—I cannot express to you the real sorrow the inequality of my behaviour gives me, when I reflect that I am in passion before the best of women.

Dear Prue, forgive me ; I will neglect nothing which may contribute to our ease together ; and you shall always find me your affectionate, faithful, tender husband,

RICH. STEELE.

Whatever his faults, there can be no doubt that Steele felt acutely any reproachful or angry conduct on the part of his Prue. In a letter dated November 20, 1720, he says :—

DEAR WIFE,—I have been in great pain of body and mind since I came out. You are extremely cruel to a generous nature, that has a tenderness for you that renders your least *dis-humour* insupportably afflicting. After short starts of passion, not to be inclined to reconciliation, is what is against all rules of Christianity and justice. When I come I beg to be kindly received, or this will have as ill an effect upon my fortune, as upon my mind and body.

RICH. STEELE.

One reason of their differences was doubtless her want of implicit trust in Steele's doings, which was not by any means surprising.

*Berry Street, half-an-hour after Six,
Wednesday, Aug. 9, 1710.*

DEAR PRUE,—Thou art such a foolish, tender thing that there is no living with thee.

I broke my rest last night, because I knew you would be such a fool as not to sleep. Pray come home by this morning's coach, if you are impatient; but, if you are not here before noon, I will come down to you in the evening; but I must make visits this morning, to hear what is doing.—Yours ever,

RICH. STEELE.

But although there might be misunderstandings, there was always the same tender spirit of love.

March, 19, 1713-14.

MY DEAR WIFE,—I will take immediate care of what you send about. Pray, let nothing disquiet you, for God will protect and prosper your innocence and virtue, for your sake, dear Prue,—
Your faithful husband and humble servant,

RICH. STEELE.

There is no date to the next letter, which seems to have been written early in 1716, and probably refers to some advice which Lady Steele had thought it right to give her husband.

DEAR PRUE,—I have yours, and if I have ever offended you, I am heartily sorry for it, and beg your pardon. As to the next circumstance, the world is all alike everywhere, and I know no occasion for expecting great friendship and disinterested conduct, but maintain a discreet and distant correspondence, at the same time always ready to do what good one can to relations, without thinking of what return they will make. I do as you advise, court and converse with men able and willing to serve me. But, after this, you grow very pleasant, and talk of £800. Please

to show me in your next how you make out such a demand upon me, and you shall have my serious answer to it; your words are, 'the full £800 you owe me.' You advise me to take care of my soul. I do not know what you can think of yours, when you have and do withhold from me your body. I observe what you say of cousin Alexander, and I shall be glad of his correspondence. I have not yet had any money as a commissioner, but shall next week, and then will pay Betty's* schooling fee.—Your most obedient, humble husband and servant,

RICH. STEELE.

I enclose you a letter from Morgan Davies, with my answer on the back. I believe you had better concede that. I send you his letter; you may be sure he shall have no consent of mine separate from yours, for you rule me entirely.

Steele evidently profited by his Prue's advice.

Feb. 5, 1716-17.

DEAR PRUE,—I write without having anything new to say. I am going to be very easy, God be thanked, in my affairs; to throw off all hangers-on, put my debts in a regular way of payment,

* His daughter.

which I cannot immediately discharge ; and try to behave myself with the utmost circumspection and prudence in all the duties of life, especially of being, dear Prue, your most obliged husband and obedient, humble servant,

RICH. STEELE.

The next letter refers to her anxiety about his health, and has no date.

MY DEAREST PRUE AND BELOVED WIFE, &c.,—
I have yours of the 7th instant, which turns wholly upon my taking care of my health, and advice to forbear embarking too deeply in public matters, which you enforce by reminding me of the ingratitude I have met with. I have as quick sense of the ill-treatment I have received as is consistent with keeping up my own spirit and good humour. Whenever I am a malcontent I will take care not to be a gloomy one, but hope to keep some stings of wit and humour in my own defence. I am talking to my wife, and therefore may speak my heart and the vanity of it.

I know, and you are my witness, that I have served the Royal Family with an unreservedness due only to Heaven, and I am now (I thank my brother Whigs) not possessed of twenty shillings

from the favour of the Court. The playhouse, it had been barbarity to deny at the player's request, and therefore I do not allow it a favour. But I banish the very memory of things, nor will I expect anything but what I must strike out of misery.

By Tuesday's post I think I shall be able to guess when I shall leave the town, and turn all my thoughts to finish my comedy.* You will find I have got so much constancy and fortitude as to live my own way (within the rules of good breeding and decency) wherever I am; for I will not sacrifice your husband, and the father of the poor babes, to anyone's humour in the world.

But to provide for you and do you good, is all my ambition.—I am, dear PRUE, ever yours,

RICH. STEELE.

On the other hand, Steele was equally concerned about his Prue's health, as may be gathered from the letter which we next quote.

March 26, 1717.

MY DEAREST PRUE,—I have received yours, wherein you give me the sensible affliction of letting me know of the continual pain in your head. I could not meet with necessary advice; but

* Perhaps his 'Conscious Lovers.'

according to the description you give me, I am confident washing your head in cold water will cure you ; I mean, having water poured on your head, and rubbed with one hand, from the crown of your head to the nape of your neck.

When I lay in your place, and on your pillow, I assure you, I fell into tears last night, to think that my charming little insolent might be then awake and in pain, and took it to be a sin to go to sleep.

For this tender passion towards you, I must be contented that your Prueship will condescend to call yourself my well-wisher. I am going abroad, and write before I go out, lest accidents should happen to prevent my writing at all. I am, dear PRUE, ever thine,

RICH. STEELE.

The next letter, which is undated, speaks for itself:—

DEAR PRUE,—I have yours, with your advice against temptation, etc. All I can aver is, that I have learned a language, and written a book, to keep me out of vanities. All shall be done as fast as I can. O Prue, you are very unkind in writing in so cool a strain to the warmest, tenderest heart that ever woman commanded. I

am, dear PRUE, your most obedient husband and most humble servant,

RICH. STEELE.

Throughout the correspondence, it is noticeable that Steele strongly resented anything at all approaching to forgetfulness on the part of Prue, in writing to him. As an illustration, we may quote the following letter, which, by-the-by, has no date.

DEAR PRUE,—I am under much mortification from not having a letter from you yesterday, but will hope that the distance from the post, now you are at Blancorse, is the occasion.

I love you with the most ardent affection, and very often run over little heats that have sometimes happened between us, with tears in my eyes.

I think no man living has so good, so discreet a woman to his wife as myself; and I thank you for the perseverance in urging me incessantly to have done with the herd of indignant, unthankful people, who have made me neglect those who should have been my care from the first principle of charity.

I have been very importunate for justice in the endeavours I have used to serve the public;

and hope I shall very soon have such reparation as will give me agreeable things to say to you at our meeting, which God grant to you and your most obsequious husband,

RICH. STEELE.

His high appreciation of his Prue's conduct, was, as the reader must have already observed, very marked; as in the subjoined letter, which bears no date.

MY DEAR, HONOURED, LOVELY PRUE,—I yesterday received two letters from you by the same post, and am comforted from the fear of want of health, which I thought occasioned the omission of a letter.

I highly admire and honour you for your good conduct in clearing your estate and paying your debts. Nothing on my part shall be omitted to render you cheerful in your endeavours for our common good; for I design to allow you to be the headpiece, and give as much into your power as I can, which is but justice to the good and skilful use you have made of the power already reposed in you.—Depend upon it, I abhor debt as much as treason.—Ever yours,

RICH. STEELE.

Again he refers to the old subject of her omission in writing—

May 18, 1717.

DEAR PRUE,—I was mightily pleased with a letter under your hand, for the length of which I thank you. I do not insist upon long epistles; but to have a line is absolutely necessary to keep up our spirits to each other. I am obliged to you for your inclination towards the girls and the thought of taking up the mortgage.

You bid me write no cross stuff. I ask no unreasonable things to keep me in good humour. I cannot imagine what you and your cousin can have disagreed so much about.—Ever yours,

RICHARD STEELE.

Again we find him lavishing praise on Prue in a letter, dated June 20, 1717.

DEAR PRUE,—I have yours of the 14th, and am infinitely obliged to you for the length of it. I do not know another whom I could commend for that circumstance; but where we entirely love, the continuance of anything they do to please us is a pleasure.

I hope, by the grace of God, to continue what you wish me, every way, an honest man.

You are the head of us; and I stoop to a female reign, as being naturally made the slave of beauty. But to prepare for our manner of living when we are again together, give me leave to say, while I am here at leisure, and come to lie at Chelsea, what I think may contribute to our better way of living.

I would have you entirely at leisure, to pass your time with me in diversions, in books, in entertainments, and no manner of business intrude upon us but at stated times.

For though you are made to be the delight of my eyes, and good of all my senses and faculties, yet a turn of care and housewifery, and I know not what prepossession against conversation-pleasures, robs one of the witty and handsome woman to a degree not to be expressed. I will work my brains and fingers to produce us plenty of all things, and demand nothing of you but to take delight in agreeable dresses, cheerful discourses, and gay sights attended by me — With the greatest fondness, your most obliged and most obedient husband,

RICH. STEELE.

With the following letter we conclude this correspondence—

July 11, 1717.

Ten thousand times, my dear, dear, pretty Prue, I have been in very great pain for having omitted writing you last post. You know the unhappy gaiety of my temper when I get in, and indeed I went into company, without having writ before I left my house in the morning, which I will not do any more.

Your letter has extremely pleased me with the gaiety of it, and, you may depend upon it, my ambition is now only turned towards keeping that up in you, and giving you reasons for it in all things about you.

Two people who are entirely linked together in interest, in humour, in affection, may make this being very agreeable; the main thing is to preserve always a disposition to please and be pleased.

Now, as to your ladyship, when I think fit to look at you, to hear you, to touch you, gives delight in a greater degree than any other creature can bestow; and indeed it is not virtue, but good sense and wise choice to be constant to you. You did well not to dwell upon one circumstance in your letter; for when I am in good health, and I thank God I am at this present writing,

it awakes wishes too warmly to be well borne when you are at so great a distance.

Think, dream, and wish for nothing but me, who make you a return in the same affection to you for ever,—Your most obsequious, obedient, husband,

RICH. STEELE.

Pray date your letters.

LORD PETERBOROUGH

1735

CHARLES MORDAUNT, first Earl of Monmouth and third Earl of Peterborough, well known for his romantic courage and adventures, has been also celebrated as 'one of those men of careless wit and negligent grace who scatter a thousand *bon mots* and idle verses,' which on inspection often appear little worthy of their reputation.

It appears that Lord Peterborough when he fell in love with Mrs Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, and who, as is well known, was for many years the mistress of George the Second, must have been about sixty-five years of age, and if not married secretly engaged to Mrs Robinson. On the other hand his *Amoret* was about forty, the wife of one man and the acknowledged favourite of another. Anyhow, Lord Peterborough declares that Mrs Howard's eyes

have pierced his heart and have robbed him of peace, and in his letters freely expresses his feelings.

His letters, too, were written in such a serious, earnest style that Mrs Howard was obliged to call in help to answer them. How far Gay assisted her it is not easy to judge. But judging from the following extract it would seem that Lord Peterborough commenced a very vigorous correspondence:—‘I do not know whether your lordship expects I should answer every letter you write in exact time and form, in order to provoke you to write another; if you do, I fancy your last was an artifice to [declare my sentiments on the subject of love at first, which I think a little unfair, for the most that is expected from a woman is to be upon the defensive.’

Passing over numerous letters in which we find an elaborate description of how lovers should behave, it is evident that his object is in this way to draw out the feelings of Mrs Howard, whom he finds more than his match. Although oftentimes, too, his letters are written as if he were speaking of a certain lady, they are all the time evidently addressed to her. To quote a specimen of his letters he thus writes:—By my honour, by truth (which I love almost as well as the author of my torments), I protest to you

there is a lady so terrible to me that the first moments I approach her I can hardly speak ; and I feel myself the greatest fool in nature near the woman in the world who has the most wit.

To what has a friend innocently exposed me ? The brims of the cup were sweet, but the dose was strong, and I drank it down with too much greediness. What I may obtain, I know not ; what I have lost, I know—in a word all satisfaction and my quiet ; and I remain tasteless to all pleasures, and to all of your sex but one.

But I expect little by this account from the person in question. I believe it is not new to her to see such effects of her wit and beauty, and I fear she may have hardened her heart by the knowledge of her superior worth, and by a just contempt of mankind. Alas ! were there some differences betwixt my adoration and that of others, how shall I make it known ? Some angry deity, designing punishment, gave to one woman so many different charms ; and I was fated to be the wretched man capable of receiving as much love as he could give. . . .

I fly from danger for a little time by absolute necessity. I fear I should do it by choice if I could foresee my fate. Perhaps I should never come back, but the bubbles you mention always

return to play and love, though to their certain ruin.

‘ In music no delight my soul can find,
 Music can only please the quiet mind ;
 The softest touches only can inspire
 Repeated fury to the raging fire.
 The wretched lover, doubtful of relief,
 Abhors the pleasing sounds which check his grief.
 He scorns relief but from the wounding fair ;
 Unless she cures, he nourishes despair :
 Freedom he hates, and hugs the fatal chain,
 And fond of grief, his sole delight is pain.

‘ Call you that *life* to breathe without desire,
 Or quench in dulness love’s transporting fire ?
 Or why beloved, if you without return
 Must freeze in cold, and see your lover burn ?
 What greater curse than drowsily to live,
 And neither pleasure know nor pleasure give ?
 If to no charms you will your heart resign
 But such as equal, such as merit thine,
 Treat with the poets for celestial love,
 And choose the shape in which you’ll have your Jove,
 The bards alone can give deserving lovers,
 Yet ’tis some creature which the god discovers.’

In reply to this letter Mrs Howard wrote as follows :—

I think you fancy me very unlike a woman to have the power to contain myself so long as to be spoken to twice without a reply—I mean to have received two of your letters without returning an answer, by which you will find that a

woman's pen is not so ready as her tongue, for most women speak before they think, and I find it necessary to think before I write. . . . I think that you are not in such a dying condition as your spleen represents you, when by all your thoughts and expressions your mind seems to be so much alive. I think every man is in the wrong who talks to a woman of dying for her ; for the only women that can have received a benefit from such a protestation are the widows. You talk of flying from dangers, I cannot think your lordship would fly from an imaginary one who have stood so many real ones. I would not have you call it a flight but rather a retreat, for by your past conduct (if you will give me leave to make use of a *double entendre*) I suppose you will rally again.

Later on Lord Peterborough writes again :—

Change of air, the common remedy has no effect ; and flight, the refuge of all who fear gives me no manner of security or ease ; a fair devil haunts me wherever I go, though perhaps not so malicious as the black ones, yet more tormenting. How much more tormenting is the beauteous devil than the ugly one ! The first I am always thinking of, the other seldom comes in my thoughts ; the terrors of the ugly devil very often

diminish upon consideration, but the oppressions of the fair one become more intolerable every time she comes into my mind.

The chief attribute of the devil is tormenting. Who could look upon you and give you that title? Who can feel what I do and give you any other?

But, most certainly I have more to lay to the charge of the fair one that can be objected to Satan or Beelzebub. We may believe that they only have a mind to torment because they are tormented; if they endeavour to procure us misery it is because they are in pain: they must be our companions in suffering; but my white devil partakes none of my torments.

In a word, give me heaven, for it is in your power, or you may have an equal hell! Judge of the disease by the extravagant symptoms; one moment I curse you, the next I pray for you.

Oh! hear my prayers or I am miserable. Forgive me if I threaten you; take this for a proof as well as punishment. If you can prove inhuman you shall have reproaches from Moscow, China, or the barbarous quarters of Tartary.

Believe me, for I think I am in earnest: this I am sure of, I could not endure my ungrateful country but for your sake.

The letter which Mrs Howard sent in reply is one of her best, but whether her own or prompted by Gay is uncertain.

I have carefully perused your lordship's letter about your fair devil and your black devil, your hell and tortures, your heaven and happiness—those sublime expressions which ladies and gentlemen use in their gallantries and distresses.

I suppose by your fair devil you mean nothing less than an angel. If so, my lord, I beg leave to give some reasons why I think a woman is neither like an angel nor a devil, and why successful and unhappy love do not in the least resemble heaven and hell. It is true, you may quote these thousand gallant letters and precedents for the use of these love terms, which have a mighty captivating sound in the ears of a woman, and have been with equal propriety applied to all women in all ages.

In the first place, my lord, an angel pretends to be nothing else but a *spirit*. If, then, a woman was no more than an angel what could a lover get by the pursuit?

The black devil is a spirit too, but one that has lost her beauty and retained her pride. Tell a woman this and ask how she likes the simile.

The pleasure of an angel is offering praise; the pleasure of a woman is receiving it.

Successful love is very unlike heaven, because you may have success one hour, and lose it the next. Heaven is unchangeable. Who can say so of love and letters? In love there are as many heavens as there are women; so that, if a man be so unhappy as to lose one heaven, he need not throw himself headlong into hell.

This thought might be carried further. But perhaps you will ask me, if a woman be neither like angel or devil, what is she like? I answer, that the only thing that is like a woman is—*another woman.*

How often has your lordship persuaded foreign ladies that nothing but them could make you forsake your dear country. But at present I find it is more to your purpose to tell me that I am the only woman that could prevail with you to stay in your ungrateful country.

The following letter, from Mrs Howard, is in answer to one suppressed.

I cannot much wonder that men are always so liberal in making presents of their hearts, yet I cannot help admiring the women who are so very fond of these acquisitions. Let us consider the ingredients that make up the heart of man.

It is composed of dissimulation, self-love,

vanity, inconstancy, equivocation, and such fine qualities. Who then would make that a present to a lady, when they have one of their own so very like it?

A man's heart never wants the outward appearance of truth and sincerity. Every lover's heart is so finely varnished with them, that it is almost impossible to distinguish the true from the false ones. According to my observations the false ones have generally the finest gloss.

When your lordship asks a heart for a heart you seem to reckon them all of equal value. I fancy you think them all false ones, which is the surest way not to be often imposed upon. I beg your lordship, in this severe opinion of hearts, to except mine as well as your own.

If you were so happy as to be the owner of a false heart, you would esteem it as the most perfect present for a lady; for should you make her a present of such a one as yours was before you parted with it, it is fifty to one whether you would receive a true one in return.

Therefore, let everyone who expects an equivalent for his heart be provided with a false one, which is equally fit for the most professed lover. It will burn, flame, bleed, pant, sigh, and receive as many darts, and appear altogether as charming as a true one. Besides, it does not in the

least embarrass the bearer, and I think your lordship was always a lover of liberty.

The next letter of Lord Peterborough's, which is based on the preceding one, more strongly reiterates his feelings for Mrs Howard.

By your letter you seem to insinuate mine may be like yours: for you honestly confess a mighty resemblance between the male and female hearts; I wish the likeness could be carried on throughout. I should almost be content (as you advise) to change a true one though for a false one, if at the same time I could receive as much beauty, wit and youth.*

You own you can make no judgment of your own heart, declaring positively that woman cannot judge of a woman: out of complaisance to your opinion, I suppose the same of man. There can be, then, but one expedient how we may come at some probable conjectures of each other. If you would make as honest confessions to me as I would do to you, then you might judge of my heart, and I of yours.

Without similes or studied expressions, I would tell you my distress. I would truly describe what I have felt for others—what I feel

* Mrs Howard was now about forty years old.

for you. I would reveal every thought, as good Catholics do to their Father Confessors; and upon the whole matter you shall determine whether you can give me absolution for the past and credit for the future.

I confess I should find great pleasure in such a bargain; for if my first wish were to have the woman's heart I love, the next would be to know it such as it is.

That I am a lover of liberty I must not deny, but it were better for me to be out of my own power. A cruel mistress could not use me worse than I commonly use myself. Take me or I shall ramble all my life in restlessness and change. Accept of the libertine for a slave, and try how faithfully I can love, honour, and obey.

As far as I can judge of myself, if you give me leave naturally to express my wrath and desires, I desire nothing more than your esteem, and want nothing but your heart.

. From the following letter it would seem that Mrs Howard was beginning to realize how deep Lord Peterborough's attachment was for her—

I think your lordship, in the last paragraph of your letter, is a little ungenerous. In a present which you tell me you have made to me, you ex-

pect the most exact return, which generosity generally leaves to the courtesy of the receiver.

You quote scripture to justify the reasonableness of your request: 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a heart for a heart.'

This seems to me to be rather a demand of revenge and resentment than love. But a man cannot give a heart for a heart that has none to give.

Consider, my lord, you have but one heart, and then consider whether you have a right to dispose of it. Is there not a lady at Paris who is convinced that nobody has it but herself? Did you not bequeath it to another lady at Turin? At Venice you disposed of it to six or seven, and you again parted with it at Naples and in Sicily. I am therefore obliged, my lord, to believe that one who disposes of his heart in so profuse a manner is like a juggler, who seems to fling away a piece of money, but still has it in his own keeping.

In reply to this communication, Lord Peterborough wrote again thus:—

Before I complain, I give you thanks that in the several dispositions of my heart, you have had

the grace not to bestow it on any German lady,* but have you not too much confined my generosity, and forgot that some Blacks are very beautiful, and Indians very lively?

By your account I am in the condition to make you the greater and the juster compliment. I give you the preference to all the women in the world, with authority too, since I believe no person ever had the opportunity of seeing such variety.

But give me leave to tell you your intelligence is very imperfect and in many cases false. I have no knowledge of the lady you begin with. I was ever too good an Englishman to submit to a French enemy, and were I to offer anything to a lady at Paris, it should be three bottles of champagne, and not one heart.

At Turin I was so busied in making kings that I had not time to think of ladies, and was so far from making a conveyance that I know no person that ever had the least pretence to me or I to them. Venice, indeed, was an idle place and proper enough for an idle engagement; but alas! madam, hate does not differ more from love than a Venetian amusement from an English passion, such an one as I feel for you.

In truth, you never had in any country, nor

* This is a sneer at the taste of George I: and indeed (as it turned out afterwards) of George II too.

could have, but one rival ; for in no place I ever found any to compare to you but one, and that was an English lady,* and a wife ; so that, after all this vagabond heart never went out of his own country, and the first and last true and warm passions seized me in this cold climate and the deep and lasting wounds were given me at home.

Were you curious upon any score, and would believe my confessions, I would appeal to your judgment, whether my heart was ever so much in any other woman's power as in yours ? I could appeal to what is past as well as to what I am sure will happen ; for you shall and will believe that I have had for you a passion which deserves neither reproach nor reproof.

The repetition of either seriously would throw me into such melancholy and despair that, consenting to my fate, I should never be able to maintain the greatest innocence or justify the greatest love.

Oh ! madam, may I not say were there a possibility of some return that I would prefer one kind thought to the mines of Peru and Mexico ?

A heart for a heart is a natural though

* Can this be an allusion to his own engagement with Anastasia Robinson ? It would seem singularly out of place here, yet what else could his lordship mean ?

unreasonable demand. Oh! dearest lady, refuse not mine and do with your own as you think fit, provided you keep it to yourself; or keep it, at least, till you can find one who deserves it.

ALEXANDER POPE

1744

AMIDST his poetical pursuits, Pope was never so entirely absorbed as not to cultivate a variety of friendships, some of which were with the female sex. Two ladies, Teresa and Martha Blount, daughters of a Roman Catholic clergyman, Lister Blount, who resided in a fine old Elizabethan mansion on the banks of the Thames, near Reading, which had been held in the civil war by a royalist Blount, against a parliamentary assault—attracted his particular attention, and they became his most intimate friends. It does not appear when his acquaintance commenced, but he speaks of having been ‘ever since his infancy in love with one after the other of them, week by week.’ Anyhow, Teresa was born on October 15, 1688, and Martha on June 15, 1690. They were





POPE.

educated first at a school at Hammersmith, finishing their schooling at Paris. To Teresa, the handsomer of the two, he seems at first to have been principally attached ; but Martha afterwards became his intimate confidant and companion. Indeed, in the latter part of his life he seems to have been mainly dependent on her for care and sympathy, and how closely united to her he became may be gathered from an allusion he makes in a letter to one of his friends, wherein he speaks of her as a friend—'a woman friend'—with whom I have spent three or four hours a day for the last fifteen years.

Commencing with his correspondence, we may begin with a letter which he wrote to Teresa from Bath.

September [1714].

MADAM,—I write to you for two reasons, one is because you commanded it, which will be always a reason to me in anything ; the other, because I sit at home to take physic, and they tell me that I must do nothing that costs me great application or great pains, therefore I can neither say my prayers nor write verses. I am ordered to think but slightly of anything, and I am practising, if I can think so of you, which, if I can bring about, I shall be above regarding anything in nature for the future ; I may then

think of the world as a hazel nut, the sun as a spangle, and the king's coronation as a puppet show. When my physic makes me remember those I love, may it not be said to work kindly? Hide, I beseech you, this pun from Miss Patty, who hates them in compliance to the taste of a noble earl, whose modesty makes him detest double meanings. . . .

Let me tell her she will never look so finely while she is upon the earth as she would in the water. It is not here, as in most instances, but those ladies that would please extremely must go out of their own element. She does not make half so good a figure on horseback as Christina, Queen of Sweden; but were she once seen in Bath, no man would part with her for the best mermaid in Christendom.

Ladies, I have you so often, I perfectly know how you look in black and white. I have experienced the utmost you can do in any colours; but all your movements, all your graceful steps, all your attitudes and postures, deserve not half the glory you might here attain of a moving and easy behaviour in buckram; something betwixt swimming and walking; free enough, yet more modestly half-naked than you appear anywhere elsewhere.

You have conquered enough already by land; show your ambition, and vanquish also by water.

We have no pretty admirers on these seas, but must strike sail to your white flags were they once hoisted up. The buckram I mention is a dress particularly useful at this time, when the Princess is bringing over the fashion of German ruffs. You ought to dress yourselves to some degree of stiffness beforehand; and when our ladies' chins have been tickled awhile with a starched muslin and wires, they may possibly bear the brush of a German beard and whisker.

* * * *

You are to understand, madam, that my *violent* passion for your fair self and your sister has been divided, and with the most wonderful regularity in the world. Even from my infancy I have been in love with one after the other of you week by week, and my journey to Bath fell out in the three hundred seventy-sixth week of the reign of my sovereign lady Martha. At the present writing hereof it is the three hundred and eighty-ninth week of the reign of your most serene majesty, in whose service I was listed some weeks before I beheld her. This information will account for my writing to either of you hereafter, as she shall happen to be queen regent at that time.

I could tell you a most delightful story of Dr Parnelle, but want room to display it in all its

shining circumstances. He had heard it was an excellent cure for love, to kiss the aunt of the person beloved, who is generally of years and experience enough to damp the fiercest flame. He tried this course in his passion for you, and kissed Mrs Englefield at Mrs Dancaster's.* This recipe he hath left written in the style of a divine as follows:—*Whoso loveth Miss Blount shall kiss her aunt and be healed; for he kisseth her not as her husband, who kisseth and is enslaved for ever as one of the foolish ones; but as a passenger who passeth away and forgetteth the kiss of her mouth, even as the wind saluteth a flower in his passage, and knoweth not the odour thereof.*

The next letter is addressed to Martha Blount—

MOST DIVINE—It is some proof of my sincerity towards you, that I write when I am prepared by drinking to speak truth; and sure a letter after twelve at night must abound with that noble ingredient. That heart must have abundance of flames, which is at once warmed by wine and you: wine awakens and expresses the lurking passions of the mind, as varnish does the colours that are sunk in a picture, and brings them out in all their

* Duncastle.

natural glowings. My good qualities have been so frozen and locked up in a dull constitution at all my former sober hours, that it is very astonishing to me, now I am drunk, to find so much virtue in me.

In these overflowings of my heart I pay you my thanks for these two obliging letters you favoured me with of the 18th and 24th instant. That which begins with 'My charming Mr Pope!' was a delight to me beyond all expression; you have at last entirely gained the conquest over your fair sister. It is true you are not handsome, for you are a woman, and think you are not: but this good humour and tenderness for me has a charm that cannot be resisted. That face must needs be irresistible which was adorned with smiles, even when it could not see the coronation!* I do suppose you will not show this epistle out of vanity, as I doubt not your sister does all I write to her. . . .

Another letter written to Martha Blount is dated Friday, 3rd June [1715]—

MADAM,—I dare not pretend to instruct a lady when to take anything kindly. Their own hearts are always the best directors. But if I might, I

* Of George I, Sept. 1714.

would tell you, that if ever I could have any merit with you, it is in writing to you at a time when I am studying to forget every creature I ever loved or esteemed; when I am concerned for nothing in the world but the life of the one or two who are to be impeached, and the health of a lady that has been sick; when I am to be entertained only with that jade whom everybody thinks I love as a mistress, but whom in reality I hate as a wife,—my Muse. Pity me, madam, who am to lie in of a poetical child for at least two months. As soon as I am up again, I will wait upon you, but in the meantime I beg to hear if you are quite recovered from your ague,—the only thing I desire to hear from anyone in my present state of oblivion.

* * * *

A long interval elapses before his next letter to her, which is dated Friday [27th July 1715]—

MADAM,—I have long been sensible of your fore-knowledge of the will of Heaven, which (as I have often told you) I can attribute to nothing but a secret correspondence with your fellow-beauties, the angels of light. . . .

I beg your pardon for my spleen, to which

you showed so much indulgence, and desire yourself and your fair sister to accept of these fans as a part of my penalty. . . .

What to wish for Mrs Teresa and you I know not, but that I wish as sincerely as I do for myself, and that I am in love with you both, as I am with myself, and find myself most so with all three when I least expect it.

We now come to a letter written to Teresa, bearing the date of Aug. 7 [1716.]—

MADAM,—I have so much esteem for you, and so much of the other thing, that, were I a handsome fellow, I should do you a vast deal of good: but as it is, all I am good for, is to write a civil letter, or to make a fine speech. The truth is, that considering how often and how openly I have declared love to you, I am astonished (and a little affronted) that you have not forbid my correspondence, and directly said, *See my face no more!*

It is not enough, madam, for your reputation, that you have your hands pure from the stain of such ink as might be shed to gratify a male correspondent. Alas! while your heart consents to encourage him in this lewd liberty of writing, you are not (indeed you are not) what you would so fain have me think you—a prude! I am vain

enough to conclude that (like most young fellows) a fine lady's silence is consent, and so I write on—

But, in order to be as innocent as possible in this epistle, I will tell you news. You have asked me news a thousand times, at the first word you spoke to me; which some would interpret as if you expected nothing from my lips: and truly it is not a sign two lovers are together, when they can be so impertinent as to inquire what the world does. All I mean by this is, that either you or I cannot be in love with the other: I leave you to guess which of the two is that stupid and insensible creature, so blind to the other's excellences and charms.

* * * *

At times Pope seems to have believed that his friends Martha and Teresa did not care for him, a belief which he does not hesitate to tell them.

DEAR LADIES,—I think myself obliged to desire you would not put off any diversion you may find in the prospect of seeing me on Saturday, which is very uncertain. I take this occasion to tell you once for all, that I design no longer to be a constant companion when I have ceased to

be an agreeable one. . . . If you had any love for me, I should be always glad to gratify you with an object that you thought agreeable. But as your regard is friendship and esteem, those are things that are well—perhaps better—preserved absent than present. A man that loves you is a joy to your eyes at all times. A man that you esteem is a solemn kind of thing, like a priest, only wanted at a certain hour, to do his office. 'Tis like oil in a salad—necessary, but of no manner of taste. . . .

Let me open my whole heart to you. I have sometimes found myself inclined to be in love with you, and as I have reason to know, from your temper and conduct how miserably I should be used in that circumstance, it is worth my while to avoid it. . . . I love you so well that I tell you the truth, and that has made me write this letter. . . . I wish you every pleasure God and man can pour upon ye; and I faithfully promise you all the good I can do, which is the service of a friend who will ever be, ladies, entirely yours.

But of Pope's sincere love for his lady friends there is, in this voluminous correspondence, the most abundant proof. Then in a letter dated

October 30 [1719?] to Martha Blount, he writes :—

I am sure there is scarce an hour in which I am not thinking of you, and of everything relating to you, and therefore every least notice given me of you, is to me the most important news in the world. I am truly concerned for your headache, and for your finding the town disagreeable; but I hope both of these uneasinesses will be transitory, and that you will soon (even the very next day after your complaint) find both yourself and the town mighty well again.

I do sincerely, and from my soul, wish you every pleasure and contentment the world can give; and do assure you at the same time, the greatest I can receive will always be in hearing of yours, and in finding, by your communicating it to me, that you know how much I partake of it. This will satisfy my conscience better than if I continued to trouble you daily, though there is no day of my life that I do not long to see you. . . . God give you good fortune (the best thing he can give in this world to those who can be happy.) You know I have no palate to taste it, and therefore am in no concern or haste to hear whether I gain or lose. . . .

Pope, who it must be remembered, was always an invalid, was at no time in his life more depressed than about the years 1719 and 1720, which accounts for the despondent tone in some of his letters. Writing to Teresa Blount, for instance, he says :—

Your letter gives me a concern, which none, but one who (in spite of all accidents) is still a friend, can feel. I am pleased, however, that anything I said explains my past actions or words in a better sense than you took them. I know in my heart (a very uncorrupt witness), that I was constantly the thing I professed myself to be to you; that was something better, I will venture to say, than most people were capable to be, to you, or anybody else.

As for forgiveness, I am approaching I hope to that time and condition in which everybody will be willing to give it, and to ask it of all the world. I sincerely do so with regard to you, and beg pardon also for that very fault of which I taxed others, my vanity which made me so resenting. . . .

I desire extremely to see you both again; yet I believe I shall see you no more, and I sincerely hope, as well as think, both of you will be glad of it. I therefore wish you may each of you find

all you desired I could be, in some one whom you may like better to see. In the meantime, I bear testimony of both of you to each other, that I have certainly known you truly each other's friend, and wish you a long enjoyment of each other's love and affectionate offices. I am piqued at your brother, as much as I have spirit left to be piqued at anyone; and I promise you I will prove it by doing everything I can in your service.

Again much the same feeling is exhibited in the letter which he wrote to Martha Blount on her birthday—

[June 15, 1724.]

This is the day of wishes for you, and I hope you have long known there is not one good one which I do not form in your behalf. Every year that passes I wish some things more for my friends and some things less for myself. Yet were I to tell you what I wish for you in particular, it would be only to repeat in prose what I told you last year in rhyme (so sincere is my poetry). I can only add, that as I then wished you a friend,* I now wish that friend were Mrs ——.

* To Mrs Blount on her birthday—
 O be thou blest with all that Heaven can send
 Long health, long youth, long pleasures, and a friend.

Absence is a short kind of death, and in either, one can only wish that the friends we are separated from may be happy with those that are left them. I am therefore very solicitous that you may pass much agreeable time together. I am sorry to say I envy you no other companion; though I hope you have others that you like, and I am always pleased in that hope when it is not attended with any fears on your own account.

I was troubled to leave you both, just as I fancied we should begin to live together in the country. It was a little like dying the moment one had got all one desired in this world. Yet I go away with one generous sort of satisfaction that what I part with, you are to inherit. . . . Wherever I wander one reflection strikes me; I wish you were as free as I; or at least had a tie as tender, and as reasonable as mine, to a relation that as well deserved your constant thought, and to whom you would be always pulled back (in such a manner as I am) by the heart string.

* * * *

The next and last letter we quote was written to Martha Blount when Pope was evidently in a very low state :—

[25 March 1744.]

DEAR MADAM,—Writing is become very painful to me, if I would write a letter of any length. . . . I assure you I do not think half so much what will become of me as of you, and when I grow worst I find the anxiety for you doubled. Would to God you would quicken your haste to settle, by reflecting what a pleasure it would be to me just to see it, and to see you at ease; and then I could contentedly leave you to the providence of God in this life and resign myself to Him in the other. I have little to say to you when we meet but I love you upon unalterable principles, which makes me feel my heart the same to you as if I saw you every hour. Adieu!

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

Shortly after her marriage, Lady Wortley Montagu went with her husband on an embassy to Constantinople, during which time Pope's correspondence with her commenced. On her return she settled at Twickenham, which afforded Pope constant opportunities of seeing her. But ere long there was a misunderstanding ending in an open quarrel in which they indulged in vituperations, to say the least, intensely vulgar.

It has been suggested that the quarrel originated in the fact that Pope, forgetting Lady Montagu had a husband, made love to her so seriously that, instead of repulsing him in earnest, she was intensely amused, at which the vanity of the poet was mortally wounded.

Tuesday morning, 1716.

MADAM,—So natural as I find it is to me to neglect everybody else in your company, I am sensible I ought to do anything that might please you ; and I fancied upon recollection, our writing the letter you proposed was of that nature I therefore sate down to my part of it last night, when I should have gone out of town. Whether or no you will order me, in recompense, to see you again, I leave to you ; for indeed I find I begin to behave myself worse to you than to any other woman, as I value you more ; and yet, if I thought I should not see you again, I would say some things here, which I could not to your person.

For I would not have you die deceived in me ; that is, go to Constantinople* without knowing that I am to some degree of extravagance, as well as with the utmost reason, MADAM, your etc.

* She left England with her husband about the end of July, 1716.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

Aug. 18, 1716.

MADAM,—I can say little to recommend the letters I am beginning to write to you, but that they will be the most impartial representations of a free heart, and the truest copies you ever saw, though of a very mean original.—You will do me an injustice if you look upon anything I shall say from this instant, as a compliment either to you or to myself. Whatever I write will be the real thought of that hour, and I know you will no more expect it of me to persevere till death, in every sentiment or notion I now set down, than you could imagine a man's face should never change after his picture was once drawn.

I think I love you as well as King Herod could Herodias (though I never had so much as one dance with you), and would as freely give you my heart in a dish as he did another's head.

But since Jupiter will not have it so, I must be content to show my taste in life, as I do my taste in painting, by loving to have as little drapery as possible, 'not that I think everybody naked altogether so fine a sight as yourself and a few more would be;' but because it is good to

use people to what they must be acquainted with ; and there will certainly come some day of judgment to uncover every soul of us. We shall then see how the prudes of this world owed all their fine figure only to their being a little straiter laced and that they were naturally as arrant squabs as those that went more loose, nay, as those that never girded their loins at all.

But a particular reason to engage you to write your thoughts the most freely to me, is, that I am confident no one knows you better. For I find, when others express their opinion of you, it falls very short of mine and I am sure at the same time theirs is such as you would think sufficiently in your favour.

You may easily imagine how desirous I must be of corresponding with a person who had taught me long ago that it was as possible to esteem at first sight, as to love : and who have since ruined me for all the conversation of one sex, and almost all the friendship of the other.

How often have I been quietly going to take possession of that tranquillity and indolence I had so long found in the country, when one evening of your conversation has spoiled me for a *solitaire* too. Books have lost their effect upon me, and I was convinced since I saw you, that there is

something more powerful than philosophy, and, since I heard you, that there is one alive wiser than all the sages. A plague of female wisdom! it makes a man ten times more uneasy than his own.

What is very strange, Virtue herself, when you have the dressing her, is too amiable for one's repose. What a world of good might you have done in your time, if you had allowed half the fine gentlemen who have seen you to have but conversed with you! They would have been strangely caught,* while they thought only to fall in love with a fair face, and you had bewitched them with reason and virtue; two beauties that the very fops pretend to have an acquaintance with.

The unhappy distance at which we correspond removes a great many of those punctilious restrictions and decorums that oftentimes in nearer conversation prejudice truth to save good breeding. I may now hear of my faults, and you of your good qualities, without a blush on either side. We converse upon such unfortunate generous terms as exclude the regards of fear, shame or design in either of us. . . .

Let me begin then, madam, by asking you a question which may enable me to judge better of

* In this passage when first published, the word 'bit' was substituted for 'caught.'

my own conduct than most instances of my life. In what manner did I behave the last hour I saw you? What degree of concern did I discover when I felt a misfortune, which I hope you will never feel, that of parting from what one most esteems? For if my parting looked but like that of your common acquaintance, I am the greatest of all the hypocrites that ever decency made.

I never since pass by the house but with the same sort of melancholy that we feel upon seeing the tomb of a friend, which only serves to put us in mind of what we have lost. I reflect upon the circumstances of your departure, your behaviour in what I may call your last moments, and I indulge a gloomy kind of satisfaction in thinking that you gave some of those last moments to me. I would fain imagine this was not accidental, but proceeded from a penetration, which I know you have in finding out the truth of people's sentiments, and that you were not unwilling the last man that would have parted with you, should be the last that did.*

I really looked upon you then as the friends of Curtius might have done upon that hero in the instant he was devoting himself to glory,

* This letter was published with some variations in 1735 in Pope's Works. The passage in that edition runs thus:—'I reflect upon the circumstances of your departure, *which I was there a witness of* (your behaviour in what I may call your last moments), and I indulge a gloomy kind of pleasure in thinking *that those last moments were given to me*. I would fain imagine that this was not accidental,' etc.

and running to be lost out of generosity. . . .
 I am with all unalterable esteem and sincerity,
 MADAM, your most faithful, obedient, humble
 servant.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

[1716]

MADAM,—I no more think I can have too many of your letters than that I could have too many writings to entitle me to the greatest estate in the world ; which I think so valuable a friendship as yours is equal to. I am angry at every scrap of paper lost, as at something that interrupts the history of my title ; and though it is but an odd compliment to compare a fine lady to a Sibyl, your leaves, methinks, like hers, are too good to be committed to the winds ; though I have no other way of receiving them but by those unfaithful messengers.

If I do not take care I shall write myself all out to you ; and if this correspondence continues on both sides at the free rate I would have it, we shall have very little curiosity to encourage our meeting at the day of judgment.

I foresee that the further you go from me the more freely I shall write, and if (as I earnestly wish) you would do the same, I cannot guess

where it will end ; let us be like modest people, who, when they are close together, keep all decorums ; but if they step a little aside, or get to the other end of a room, can untie garters or take off shifts without scruple,*

If this distance (as you are so kind to say) enlarges your belief in my friendship, I assure you it has so extended my notion of your value, that I begin to be impious on your account, and to wish that even slaughter, ruin, and desolation, might interpose between you and Turkey ; I wish you restored to us at the expense of a whole people ; I barely hope you will forgive me for saying this, but I fear God will scarce forgive me for desiring it.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

[Oct. 1716]

After having dreamed of you several nights, besides a hundred reveries by day, I find it necessary to relieve myself by writing ; though this is the fourth letter I have sent.

For God's sake, madam, let not my correspondence be like a traffic with the grave from whence there is no return. Unless you write to me, my wishes must be like a poor papist's devotions to

* This passage is omitted in Pope's published version.

separate spirits, who, for all they know or hear from them, either may or may not be sensible of their addresses.

None but your guardian angels can have you more constantly in mind than I; and if they have, it is only because they can see you always. If ever you think of those fine young beaux of Heaven, I beg you to reflect, that you have just as much consolation from them as I have at present from you.

While all people here are exercising their speculations upon the affairs of the Turks, I am only considering them as they may concern a particular person; and, instead of forming prospects of the general tranquillity of Europe, am hoping for some effect that may contribute to your greater ease—above all, I would fain indulge an imagination, that the nearer view of the unquiet scene you are approaching to may put a stop to your further progress.

I can hardly yet relinquish a faint hope I have ever had that Providence will take some uncommon care of one who so generously gives herself up to it; and I cannot imagine God Almighty so like some of his vicegerents, as absolutely to neglect those who surrender to his mercy.
. . . Would to God, madam, all this might move either Mr Wortley or you, and that I

may soon apply to you both what I have read in one of Harlequin's comedies. He sees Constantinople in a raree-show, vows it is the finest thing upon earth and protests it is prodigiously like. 'Ay, sir,' says the man of the show, 'you have been at Constantinople, I perceive.' 'No indeed,' says Harlequin, 'I was never there myself, but I had a brother I loved dearly who had the greatest mind in the world to have gone thither.'

This is what I really mean, from my soul, though it would ruin the best project I ever had, that of obtaining through your means my fair Circassian slave; she whom my imagination had drawn more amiable than angels, as beautiful as the lady who was to choose her by a resemblance to so divine a face; she whom my hopes had already transported over so many seas and lands, and whom my eager wishes had already lodged in my arms and heart; she, I say, upon this condition may remain under the cedars of Asia, and weave a garland of palms for the brows of a Turkish tyrant, with those hands which I had destined for the soft offices of love, or at worst for transcribing amorous madrigals: let that breast, I say, be now joined to some savage heart that never beat with lust or rage; that breast inhabited by far more truth, fidelity and innocence than those

that heave with pride and glitter with diamonds ; that breast whose very conscience would have been love, where duty and rapture made but one thought, and honour must have been the same with pleasure.

I cannot go on this style ; I am not able to think of you without the utmost seriousness, and if I did not take a particular care to disguise it, my letters would be the most melancholy things in the world. . . .

I am just alarmed with a piece of news that Mr Wortley thinks of passing through Hungary, notwithstanding the war there. If ever any man loved his wife, or any mother her child, this offers you the strongest reason imaginable for staying at Vienna, at least this winter. For God's sake value yourself a little more. . . . If instead of Hungary you passed through Italy and I had any hopes that lady's climate might give a turn to your inclinations, it is but your sending me the least notice, and I will certainly meet you in Lombardy, the scene of those celebrated amours between the fair princess and her dwarf.*

From thence, how far you might draw me and I might run after you, I know no more than the spouse in the Song of Solomon ; this I know,

* This story forms the subject of a tale in verse entitled 'Woman,' published in 1709, in Jacob Tonson's Miscellany to which Pope contributed some of his early poems.

that I could be so very glad of being with you in any pleasure, that I could be content to be with you in any danger.

Since I am not to partake either, adieu! but may God, by hearing my prayers and preserving you, make me a better Christian than any modern poet is at present,—I am, MADAM, most faithfully yours.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGUE

November [1716].

The more I examine my own mind, the more romantic I find myself. Methinks it is a noble spirit of contradiction to fate and fortune, not to give up those that are snatched from us, but to follow them with warmer zeal, the further they are removed from the sense of it.

Sure flattery never travelled so far as three thousand miles; it is now only for truth, which overtakes all things, to reach you at this distance. It is a generous piece of popery that pursues even those who are to be eternally absent, into another world; let it be right or wrong, the very extravagance is a sort of piety.

I cannot be satisfied with strewing flowers over you, and barely honouring you as a thing lost; but must consider you as a glorious though

remote being, and be sending messages and prayers after you. You have carried away so much of my esteem that what remains of it is daily languishing and dying over my acquaintance here ; and, I believe, in three or four months more, I shall think Aurat-bassar as good a place as Covent Garden. . . .

I write this in some anger ; for, having frequented those people most, since you went, who seemed most in your favour. I heard nothing that concerned you talked of so often as that you went away in a black full-bottom, which I did but assert to be a bob, and was answered—love is blind. I am persuaded your wig had never suffered the criticism, but on the score of your head, and the two fine eyes that are in it.

For God's sake, madam, when you write to me, talk of yourself ; there is nothing I so much desire to hear of ; talk a great deal of yourself, that she who I always thought talked best may speak upon the best subject.

The shrines and reliques you tell me of no way engage my curiosity ; I had ten times rather go on pilgrimage to see your face, than St John Baptist's head.

. . . I doubt not but I shall be told when I come to follow you through those countries, in how pretty a manner you accommodated yourself to

the customs of the true believers. . . But if my fate be such, that this body of mine (which is as ill-matched to my mind, as any wife to her husband) be left behind in the journey, let the epitaph of Tibullus be set over it :—

Here, stopped by hasty death, Alexis lies,
Who crossed half Europe, led by Wortley's eyes.

I shall at least be sure to meet you in the next world, if there be any truth in our new doctrine of the day of judgment. Since your body is so full of fire, and capable of such solar notions as your letter describes, your soul can never be long going to the fixed stars, where I intend to settle ; or else you may find me in the milky way ; because Fontenelle assures us, the stars are so crowded there, that a man may stand upon one and talk to his friend on another. From thence, with a good telescope, what do you think one should take such a place as this world for ? I fancy, for the devil's rookery, where the inhabitants are ready to deafen and destroy one another with eternal noise and hunger. . . I can only add my desire of being always thought yours, and of being told I am thought so by yourself whenever you would make me as happy as I can be at this distance.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

June, 1717.

MADAM,—If to live in the memory of others have anything desirable in it, 'tis what you possess with regard to me in the highest sense of the words.

There is not a day in which your figure does not appear before me ; your conversations return to my thoughts, and every scene, place, or occasion where I have enjoyed them, are as livelily painted as an imagination equally warm and tender can be capable to represent them.

You tell me, the pleasure of being nearer the sun has a great effect upon your health and spirits. You have turned my affections so far eastward that I could almost be one of his worshippers : for I think the sun has more reason to be proud of raising your spirits, than of raising all the plants, and ripening all the minerals in the earth.

It is my opinion, a reasonable man might gladly travel three or four thousand leagues to see your nature, and your wit, in their full perfection. What may not we expect from a creature that went over the most perfect of this part of the world, and is every day improving by the





MARTHA BLOUNT.

sun in the other. If you do not now write and speak the finest things imaginable, you must be content to be involved in the same imputation with the rest of the East and be concluded to have abandoned yourself to extreme effeminacy, laziness, and lewdness of life. . . .

For God's sake, madam, send to me as often as you can; in the dependance that there is no man breathing more constantly, or more anxiously mindful of you. Tell me that you are well, tell me that your little son is well, tell me that your very dog (if you have one) is well. Defraud me of no one thing that pleases you, for whatever that is, it will please me better than anything else can do. I am always yours.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

Oct. 1717.

MADAM,—I write as if I were drunk; the pleasure I take in thinking of your return transports me beyond the bounds of common sense and decency. . . . I have been mad enough to make all the inquiry I could at what time you set out, and what route you were to take. If Italy run yet in your thoughts, I hope you will see it in your return. If I but knew you intended it, I would meet you there, and travel back with you.

I would fain behold the best and brightest thing I know, in the scene of ancient virtue and glory; I would fain see how you look on the very spot where Curtius sacrificed himself for his country; and observe what difference there would be in your eyes, when you ogled the statue of Julius Cæsar, and a Marcus Aurelius.

Allow me but to sneak after you in your train, to fill my pockets with coins, or to lug an old busto behind you, and I shall be proud beyond expression. Let people think, if they will, that I did all this for the pleasure of treading on classic ground; I would whisper other reasons in your ear. The joy of following your footsteps would as soon carry me to Mecca as to Rome; and let me tell you as a friend if you are really disposed to embrace the Mahometan religion, I will fly on pilgrimage with you thither, with as good a heart, and as sound devotion, as ever Jeffery Rudel, the Provençal poet, went after the fine Countess of Tripoly to Jerusalem. . . . When people speak most highly of you, I think them sparing: when I try myself to speak of you, I think I am cold and stupid. I think my letters have nothing in them, but I am sure my heart has so much, that I am vexed to find no better name for your friend and admirer, than your friend and admirer.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

Sept. 1, 1718.

MADAM,—I have been (what I never was till now) in debt to you for a letter some weeks. . . . I long for nothing so much as your Oriental self. You must of necessity be *advanced* so far *back* into true nature and simplicity of manner, by these three years' residence in the East, that I shall look upon you as so many years younger than you was, so much nearer innocence (that is, truth) and infancy (that is, openness).

I expect to see your soul as much thinner dressed as your body; and that you have left off, as unwieldy and cumbersome, a great many European habits.

Without offence to your modesty be it spoken, I have a burning desire to see your soul stark naked, for I am confident it is the prettiest kind of white soul in the universe. But, if I forget whom I am talking to; you may possibly by this time believe, according to the prophet, that you have none; if so, show me that which comes next to a soul—I mean your heart. But I must be content with seeing your body only, God send it to come quickly. I honour it more than the

diamond-casket that held Homer's Iliads ; for in the very twinkle of one eye of it there is more wit, and in the very dimple of one cheek of it there is more meaning, than all the souls that ever were casually put into women since men had the making of them. . . .

Pray let me hear from you soon, though I shall very soon write again. I am confident half our letters are lost.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

1719.

I might be dead or you in Yorkshire, for anything that I am the better for your being in town. I have been sick ever since I saw you last, and now have a swelled face, and very bad ; nothing will do me so much good as the sight of dear Lady Mary ; when you come this way let me see you, for indeed I love you.

HENRY FIELDING

1754

ACCORDING to his gifted relative, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Fielding's 'happy constitution, even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it—made him forget everything when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champagne; and I am persuaded,' she adds, 'he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret.' Accordingly idolized by the gay and thoughtless of both sexes, and wedded to a life of pleasure and excitement, Fielding had reached the height of his dissipation and debt, when the virtuous love of a chaste unselfish woman was to have a full fascination for him.

At the age of twenty-six he fell in love with, and married a most beautiful and amiable young

lady,—a Miss Charlotte Craddock of Salisbury, the Celia of his verse. In his 'Miscellaneous Poems' published in the year 1743, we find the following charming lines addressed to her—lines which show how thoroughly she had captivated his heart and won his affections.

Is there a man who would not be,
 My *Celia*, what is priz'd by thee?
 A monkey beau, to please thy sight,
 Would wish to be a monkey quite.
 Or (could'st thou be delighted so)
 Each man of sense would be a beau.
 Courtiers would quit their faithless skill,
 To be thy faithful dog *Quadrille*.
 P—l—y, who does for freedom rage,
 Would sing confined within thy cage;
 And W—l—le, for a tender pat,
 Would leave his place to be thy cat.
 May I, to please my lovely dame,
 Be five foot shorter than I am;
 And to be greater in her eyes,
 Be sunk to *Lilliputian* size.
 While on thy hand I skipt the dance,
 How I'd despise the King of *France*!
 That hand! which can bestow a store
 Richer than the *Peruvian* ore,
 Richer than *India*, or the sea,
 (That hand will give yourself away)
 Upon your lap to lay me down,
 Or hide in plaitings of your gown.
 Or on your shoulder sitting high,
 What monarch so enthron'd as I?
 Now on the rosy bud I'd rest,
 Which borrows sweetness from thy breast.

Then when my *Celia* walks abroad,
 I'd be her pocket's little load ;
 Or sit astride, to frighten people,
 Upon her hat's new-fashion'd steeple.
 These for the day: and for the night,
 I'd be a careful, watchful spright.
 Upon her pillow sitting still,
 I'd guard her from th' approach of ill.
 Thus (for afraid she could not be
 Of such a little thing as me),
 While I survey her bosom rise,
 Her lovely lips, her sleeping eyes,
 While I survey, what to declare
 Nor fancy can, nor words must dare.
 Here would begin my former pain,
 And wish to be myself again.

 TO CELIA

I hate the town and all its ways ;
 Ridottos, operas, and plays ;
 The ball, the ring, the mall, the court,
 Wherever the beau-monde resort ;
 Where beauties lie in ambush for folks,
 Earl Straffords, and the Duke of Norfolks ;
 All coffee-houses and their praters.

* * * *

I hate the world, cramm'd all together,
 From beggars, up the Lord knows whither.

Ask you then, *Celia*, if there be
 The thing I love? My charmer, thee.
 Thee more than light, than life adore,
 Thou dearest, sweetest creature more
 Than wildest raptures can express,
 Than I can tell,—or thou can'st guess.

Then, though I bear a gentle mind,
Let not my hatred of mankind
Wonder within my *Celia* move,
Since she possesses all my love.

The following also were addressed to her—

Can there on earth, my *Celia*, be
A price I would not pay for thee?
Yes, one dear precious tear of thine
Should not be shed to make thee mine.

As wildest libertines would rate,
Compar'd with pleasure, an estate ;
Or as his life a hero'd prize,
When honour claim'd the sacrifice ;
Their souls as strongest misers hold,
When in the balance weigh'd with gold ;
Such, was thy happiness at stake,
My fortune, life, and soul, I'd make.

JONATHAN SWIFT

1755

IN a letter to a certain Dr Worrall, dated 16th January 1728, Swift writes, 'When I went a lad to my mother, after the Revolution, she brought me acquainted with a family where there was a daughter. My prudent mother was afraid I should be in love with her; but when I went to London she married an innkeeper in Loughborough in that county, by whom she had several children.' The name of this fair seducer was Betty Jones. 'But,' says Swift, 'my ordinary observations have taught me experience enough not to think of marriage till I settle my fortune in the world,' and even then I am so hard to please that I suppose I shall put it off to the other world. His cold temper and unconfined humour of which he himself speaks ever militated against his putting his head into the matri-

monial halter. 'My mind,' he says, like a conjured spirit, 'would do mischief if I did not give it employment,' and so he amused himself with love-making. He tells a story of a lean, diseased and decayed horse which he purchased for a few shillings when a boy, and rode thereon a while to the envy of his schoolmates, but afterwards having no place in which to keep his steed and nothing wherewith to feed him, he began to regret the loss of his pocket-money, and was in a quandary how to manage until his charger, by lying down and dying, from sheer old age, freed him from his difficulty.

Swift's first love of note was Miss Waryng, the sister of a college friend, whom he called Varina. In a letter to this lady he suggests marriage (not having perhaps at that time the story of the horse in his mind) as a just and honourable action, which would furnish health to her, and unspeakable happiness to him. 'It was your pity opened the first way to my misfortune; and now your love is finishing my ruin.' Four years later Miss Waryng was warm for wedlock, but Swift was cold and would none of it. Could she, he asks, manage their joint affairs with an income of less than £300 a year. Now the story of the lean horse is clearly before him.

TO VARINA *

April 29, 1696.

MADAM,—Impatience is the most inseparable quality of a lover. . . † That dearest object upon which all my prospect of happiness entirely depends, is in perpetual danger to be removed for ever from my sight. Varina's life is daily wasting, and though one just and honourable action would furnish health to her and unspeakable happiness to us both, yet some power that aspires at human felicity has that influence to hold her continually doting upon her cruelty, and me on the cause of it. This fully convinces me of what we are told, that the miseries of man's life are all beaten out on his own anvil.

Why was I so foolish to put my hopes and fears into the power and management of another? Liberty is doubtless the most valuable blessing of life, yet we are fond to fling it away on those who have been these 5000 years using us ill. ‡

. . . I am a villain if I have not been poring this half-hour over the paper merely for want of something to say to you—or is it rather that I have so much to say to you that I know not where

* This letter, though beyond the time to which the present work is limited, is inserted for the sake of that which follows.

† Fragments of an essay on 'Impatience.'

‡ Fragments of an essay on 'Liberty.'

to begin, though at best it is all very likely to be arrant repetition?

. . . You have now had time enough to consider my last letter, and to form your own resolutions upon it. I wait your answer with a world of impatience . . . * and how far you will stretch the point of your unreasonable scruples to keep me here will depend upon the strength of the love you pretend for me. In short, madam, I am once more offer'd the advantage to have the same acquaintance with greatness that I formerly enjoyed, and with better prospect of interest. I here solemnly offer to forego it all for your sake. I desire nothing of your fortune, you shall live where and with whom you please till my affairs are settled to your desire; and in the meantime I will push my advancement with all the eagerness and courage imaginable, and do not doubt to succeed.

Study seven years for objections against all this, and, by Heaven, they will at last be no more than trifles and puts off. It is true you have known sickness longer than you have me, and therefore you are more loth to part with it as an older acquaintance. But listen to what I here solemnly protest by all that can be witness to an oath, that if I leave this kingdom before you are mine, I will endure the utmost indignities of

* *Maxims of philosophy.*

fortune rather than ever return again, though the King would send me back his deputy. And if it must be so, preserve yourself in God's name, for the next lover who has those qualities you love so much beyond any of mine, and who will highly admire you for the advantages which shall never share any esteem from me.

Would to Heaven you were but awhile sensible of the thoughts into which my present distractions plunge me; they hale me a thousand ways and I am not able to bear them. It is so, by Heaven! the love of Varina is of more tragical consequence than her cruelty. Would to God you had hated and scorned me from the beginning! It was your pity opened the first way to my misfortune, and now your love is finishing my ruin; and is it so then? In a fortnight I must take eternal farewell of Varina, and (I wonder) will she weep at parting, just a little to justify her poor pretence of some affection to me? and will my friends still continue reproaching me for the want of gallantry and neglecting a close siege? How comes it that they all wish us married together, they knowing my circumstances and yours extremely well, and I am sure love you too much, if it be only for my sake, to wish you anything that might cross your interest or your happiness?

Surely, Varina, you have but a very mean opinion of the joys that accompany a true, honourable, unlimited love ; yet either nature and our ancestors have highly deceived us or else all other sublunary things are dross in comparison. Is it possible you can be yet insensible to the prospect of a rapture and delight so innocent and so exalted? Trust me, Varina, Heaven has given us nothing else worth the loss of a thought. . . . The only felicity permitted to human life we clog with tedious circumstances and barbarous formality. By Heaven, Varina, you are more experienced and have less virgin innocence than I. Would not your conduct make one think you were hugely skilled in all the little politic methods of intrigue? Love with the gall of too much discretion is a thousand times worse than with none at all. It is a peculiar part of nature which art debauches but cannot improve. . . . And 'tis as possible to err in the excess of piety as of love.

These are the rules I have long followed with you, Varina ; and had you pleased to imitate them we should both have been infinitely happy. The little disguises and affected contradictions of your sex were all (to say the truth) infinitely beneath persons of your pride and mine ; paltry maxims that they are, calculated for the rabble of

humanity. O Varina, how imagination leads me beyond myself and all my sorrows ! It is sunk, and a thousand graves lie open ! No, madam, I will give you no more of my unhappy temper, though I derive it all from you.

Farewell, madam, and may love make you awhile forget your temper to do me justice. Only remember that if you still refuse to be mine you will quickly lose, for ever lose, him that has resolved to die as he has lived all yours.

JON. SWIFT.

TO MISS JANE WARYNG *

Dublin, 4th May, 1700.

MADAM,—I am extremely concerned at the account you give of your health. . . You would know whether my change of style be owing to the thoughts of a new mistress. I declare upon the word of a Christian and a gentleman it is not ; neither had I ever thoughts of being married to any other person but yourself. I had ever an opinion that you had a great sweetness of nature and humour ; and whatever appeared to the contrary I looked upon it only as a thing put on as necessary before a lover ; but I

* A very long letter, only the portions most material to the purpose of the book are here cited.

have since observed such marks of a severe indifference that I began to think it was hardly possible for one of my few good qualities to please you. . . .

When I desired an account of your fortune I had no such design as you pretend to imagine. I have told you many a time that in England it was in the power of any young fellow of common sense to get a larger fortune than ever you pretended to. I asked in order to consider whether it were sufficient with the help of my poor income to make one of your humour easy in a married state. I think it comes to about a hundred pounds a year.

Now for what concerns my future you have answered it. I desire therefore you will let me know if your health be otherwise than it was when you told me the doctor advised you against marriage as what would certainly hazard your life. Are they or you grown of another opinion in this particular? Are you in a condition to manage domestic affairs with an income of less (perhaps) than three hundred pounds a year? Have you such an inclination to my person and humour, as to comply with my desires and way of living, and endeavour to make us both as happy as you can? Will you be ready to engage in those methods I shall direct for the improve-

ment of your mind, so as to make us entertaining company for each other, without being miserable when we are neither visiting nor visited? Can you bend your love, esteem and indifference to others the same way as I do mine? Shall I have so much power in your heart, or you so much government of your passions as to grow in good humour on my approach, though provoked by a —? Have you so much good nature as to endeavour by soft words to smooth any rugged humour occasioned by the cross accidents of life? Shall the place wherever your husband is thrown be more welcome than courts and cities without him?

In short, these are some of the necessary methods to please men who, like me, are deep read in the world; and to a person thus made, I shall be proud in giving all due returns towards making her happy.

These are the questions I have always resolved to propose to her with whom I meant to pass my life; and whenever you can heartily answer them in the affirmative, I shall be blessed to have you in my arms, without regarding whether your person be beautiful, or your fortune large. Cleanliness in the first, and competency in the other is all I look for. I desire indeed a plentiful revenue, but would rather it should be of my own, though

I should bear from a wife to be reproached for the greatest.

I have said all I can possibly say in answer to any part of your letter, and in telling you my clear opinion as to matters between us. I singled you out at first from the rest of women, and I expect not to be used like a common lover.

When you think fit to send me an answer to this without—, I shall then approve myself, by all means you shall command, MADAM, your most faithful and humble servant.

By this time he had met with Stella, the 'unfortunate Stella,' of Dr Johnson, the 'pretty, dark-eyed' maiden, as Macaulay calls her. Esther Johnson poetically immortalised as Stella was Swift's pupil at Moorpark. He knew her, he says, from six years old. He gives her various pet names as M. D. in his letters.

It is hardly necessary to add, says Scott, that these letters were strictly confidential, and were written to Stella under a solemn prohibition not to show them to any one whatsoever.

London, Sept. 21, 1710.

Here must I begin another letter, on a whole sheet for fear saucy little M. D. should be angry and think much that the paper is too little. I

had your letter this night as I told you just and no more in my last ; for this must be taken up in answering yours, sauce-box.

(Sept. 23)—Here is such a stir and bustle with this little M. D. of ours; I must be writing every night: I cannot go to bed without a word to them; I cannot put out my candle till I have bid them good-night. Oh Lord! oh Lord! * * * Stella writes like an emperor*; I am afraid it hurts your eyes: take care of that, pray, pray, Mrs Stella! Write constantly! Why sirrah, do not I write every day, and sometimes twice a day to M. D.?

London, Sept. 30, 1710.

Have not I brought myself into a fine præmunire to begin writing letters on whole sheets, and now I dare not leave it off. I cannot tell whether you like these journal letters. I believe they would be dull to me to read them over, but perhaps little M. D. is pleased to know how Presto† passes his time in her absence.

(Oct. 10)—Poor M. D.'s letter was lying so huddled up among papers I could not find it. I

* Swift had been her tutor.

† Swift in the 'little language' is P.D.F.R., an awkward combination usually changed in print into *Presto*, a name given to him by the Duchess of Shrewsbury, who, being a foreigner, could not remember the English word, *Swift*. Thus, Scott.

mean poor Presto's letter. . . . And so now soon as ever I can in bed, I must begin my sixth to M. D. as gravely as if I had not written a word this month, fine doings, faith. Methinks I do not write as I should, because I am not in bed: see the ugly wide lines. God Almighty ever bless you, &c.

Faith, this is a whole treatise; I will go reckon the lines on the other sides. I have reckoned them.*

London, Oct. 10, 1710.

. . . (Oct. 13)—Oh Lord! here is but a trifle of my letter written yet, what shall Presto do for prittle prattle to entertain M. D. . . . (Oct. 14)—I am now got into bed, and going to open your little letter; and God send I may find M. D. well and happy and merry, and that they love Presto as they do fires. O, I will not open it yet! Yes, I will! No, I will not; I am going; I cannot stay till I turn over: what shall I do? my fingers itch; and I now have it in my left hand; and now I will open it this very moment.—I have just got it and am cracking the seal, and cannot imagine what is in it.

* Seventy-three lines in folio upon one page and in a very small hand.

London, Nov. 25, 1710.

So here is Mistress Stella again with her two eggs, &c. My Shower admired with you ; why the Bishop of Clogher says he has seen something of mine of the same sort, better than the Shower. I suppose he means the Morning ; but it is not half so good. I want your judgment of things and not your country's. How does M. D. like it ? and do they taste it *all*, &c ? I will break your head in good earnest, young woman, for your nasty jest about Mrs Barton. Unlucky sluttikin, what a word is there ? Faith I was thinking yesterday when I was with her whether she could break them or no, and it quite spoiled my imagination.* Mrs Wall, does Stella win as she pretends ? No indeed, doctor, she loses always, and will play so venturesomely, how can she win ? See here now, are not you an impudent, lying slut ?

Dec. 3. Pshaw ! I must be writing to those dear saucy brats every night, whether I will or no, let me have what business I will, or come home ever so late, or be ever so sleepy ; but an old saying and a true one—

Be you lords, or be you earls,
You must write to naughty girls.†

* That of the reader (if addicted to combination of rhymes) may supply some idea of the dirty jest, which a former editor laments as lost for want of M. D's letter. Scott.

† Probably Swift's own composition. He is fond of passing off such rhymes as old proverbs.

London, Dec. 9, 1710.

Stay, I will answer some of your letter this morning in bed; let me see: come and appear little letter. Here I am, says he, and what say you to Mrs M. D. this morning, fresh and fasting? O then, you keep Presto's little birthday; would to God I had been with you. I forgot it, as I told you before. Rediculous, madam? I suppose you mean *ridiculous*; let me have no more of that, it is the author of the Atlantis's bad spelling. I have mended it in your letter. And can Stella read this writing without hurting her dear eyes? O faith I am afraid not. Have a care of these eyes pray, pray, pretty Stella.— Why do not you go down to Clogher, nauti, nauti, nauti, dear girls. I dare not say nauti without dear. O, faith, you govern me. . . . You win eight shillings! you win eight fiddlesticks. Faith, you say nothing of what you lose.

London, January 16, 1710.

O faith, I have sent my letter without one crumb of answer to any of M. D's., there is for you now; and yet Presto ben't angry, faith not a bit, only he will begin to be in pain next Irish post, except he sees little M. D's handwriting in

the glass frame at the bar of St James's Coffee-house, where Presto would never go but for that purpose. . . As hope saved, nothing gives Presto any sort of dream of happiness but a letter now and then from his own dearest M. D. I love the expectation of it, and when it does not come I comfort myself that I have it yet to be happy with. Yes, faith, and when I write to M. D. I am happy too, it is just as if methinks you were here and I prating to you.

In a letter written in March of the same year :

And so you say that Stella's a pretty girl ; and so she be, and methinks I see her now as handsome as the day is long. Do you know what ? when I am writing in our language* I make up my mouth just as if I was speaking it. . . Poor Stella, will not Dingley leave her a little daylight to write to Presto ? Well, well, we will have daylight shortly, spite of her teeth ; and *zoo must cly Lele and Hele and Hele aden. Must loo mimitate Pdfr, pay ? Iss, and so la shall, and so leles fol ee rettle. Dood mollow.*

* The 'little language' of which a specimen follows. Being interpreted it is 'and you must cry There and Here and Here again. Must you imitate Presto, pray ? Yes, and you shall. And so, there's for your letter. Good morrow.'

None of Stella's letters to Swift have been preserved. Dr Madden told Dr Johnson that she was privately married to Swift in the garden by Dr Ashe Bishop of Clogher. The ceremony happened, if at all, in the year of grace 1716, under the conditions of strict secrecy and a separate life. She died in 1727. She bequeathed her fortune in her maiden name to charitable uses. Her will is dated within a month of her death. It would have been vitiated if she had described herself wrongly.

The only memento of her found among his effects was a small locket marked in his hand with an epigraph variously interpreted 'Only a woman's hair.'

Amongst the families in London where Swift was chiefly domesticated was that of a Mrs Vanhomrigh, pronounced *Vannummery*, a rich widow. Her eldest daughter Esther became the celebrated Vanessa.

She was a woman, says Dr Johnson in his life of Swift, made unhappy by her admiration of wit and 'ignominiously,'—why it is not clear,—distinguished by the name of Vanessa. She from being proud of the Dean's praise ended by becoming fond of his person. Swift was then about forty-seven, at an age when vanity is strongly excited by the amorous attention of a young

woman. When neither young, nor handsome, nor rich, nor even amiable, he inspired the two most extraordinary passions on record—

Vanessa, aged scarce a score,
Sighs for a gown of forty-four.

He requited them bitterly, for he seems to have broken the heart of the one and worn out that of the other. This at least is the view of Lord Byron, but, says Peter Cunningham it is charitable to think that the malady that drove him mad affected his heart long before it overthrew his intellect. If it be said that Swift should have checked a passion which he never meant to gratify, recourse, says Johnson, must be had to that extenuation which he so much despised 'men are but men;' perhaps, however, he did not at first know his own mind, and as he represents himself was undetermined. For his admission of her courtship and his indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella no other honest plea can be found than that he delayed a disagreeable discovery from time to time, dreading the immediate bursts of distress and watching for a favourable moment.

Cadenas (an anagram of the Latin form of Dean) or Swift has himself said little about her personal appearance. Lord Orrery said she was

not handsome, but this after all was only the opinion of Lord Orrery. Swift seems to have taken her education into his charge, as he took that of Stella. Swift's letters to the latter cooled in proportion as his love for the former grew more warm. The little language fades out of them, the intimate M. D. accompanies it; there is no more hope of a life under the willows at Laracor. It is said by Dr Johnson that Vanessa charged her executors to publish Swift's letters to her, but as most of Swift's biographers have affirmed, no such injunction appears in her will. That document is not as Johnson would have said, polluted by female resentment.

Swift's first letter to Esther Vanhomrigh seems to have been written in 1712, about this time he apologizes to Stella Johnson for the slackness of his correspondence. It is addressed to her lodgings over against Park Place in St James's Street, London.

'I thought to have written to little Missessy by the Colonel, but at last I did not approve of him as a messenger. . . I cannot imagine how you pass your time in our absence, unless by lying abed till twelve, and then having your

* Probably her brother.

followers about you till dinner. . . What do you do all the afternoon? . . I will steal to town one of these days and catch you napping. I desire you and Moll* will walk as often as you can in the Park, and do not sit moping at home, you that can neither work, nor read, nor play, nor care for company. I long to drink a dish of coffee in the sluttery, and hear you dun me for Secrete and 'Drink your coffee, why don't you drink your coffee?' My humble service to your mother and Moll, and the Colonel. Adieu!

After more letters in which he calls her *Messheshinage*, *Miss Hessy* and *Little Missessy*. We come to the first letter from the lady herself.

London, Sept. 1, 1712.

Had I a correspondent in China I might have had an answer by this time. . . You must needs be extremely happy where you are to forget your absent friends, and I believe you have formed a new system and think there is no more of this world passing your sensible horizon.

If this be your notion I must excuse you, if not you can plead no other excuse; and if it be, sir, I must reckon myself of another world; but I shall have much ado to be persuaded till you

* Her sister Mary, called sometimes by Swift Molkin.

send me some convincing arguments of it. Don't dally in a thought of the consequence but demonstrate that 'tis possible to keep up a correspondence between friends though in different worlds, and assure one another as I do you that I am your most obedient and most humble servant,—

E. VANHOMRIGH.

Swift writes to her again.

Windsor Castle, Sept. 3, 1712.

I send this haunch of venison to your mother, not to you, and this letter to you, not your mother.

There is little in the letter of interest. So far the lady's letters are far more pleasant to read than the gentleman's. Another of the former.

London, June 1713.

'Tis inexpressible the concern I am in ever since I heard that your head is so much out of order. Who is your physician? For God's sake don't be persuaded to take many slops. Satisfy me so much as to tell me what medicines you have taken and do take. How did you find yourself while a ship-board? I fear 'tis your voyage has discomposed you, and then so much

business following so immediately before you had time to recruit—'twas too much. . . . If I talk impertinently I know you have goodness enough to forgive me, when you consider how great an ease 'tis to me to ask these questions, though I know it will be a great while before I can be answered:—I am sure I shall think it so. Oh! what would I give to know how you do at this instant! My fortune is too hard, your absence was enough without this cruel addition. Sure the powers above are envious of your thinking so well, which makes them at some times strive to interrupt you. But I must confine my thoughts, or, at least, stop from telling them to you, or you'll chide, which will still add to my uneasiness.

I have done all that was possible to hinder myself from writing to you, till I heard you were better, for fear of breaking my promise, but 'tis all in vain, for had I vowed neither to touch pen, ink, nor paper, I certainly should have had some other invention; therefore I beg you won't be angry with me for doing what it is not in my power to avoid. . . . I am impatient to the last degree to hear how you are: I hope I shall soon have you here.

London, June 1713.

Mr Lewis assures me that you are now well, but will not tell me what authority he has for it. I hope he is rightly informed, though 'tis not my usual custom, when a thing of consequence is in doubt to fix on what I scarcely wish; but I have already suffered so much by knowing that you were ill and fearing that you were worse than you have been that I will strive to change the thought if possible, that I may have a little ease, and more, that I may not write you a splenetic letter. Pray why would not you make Parvisol* write me word how you did when I begged it so much? and if you were able yourself, how could you be so cruel to defer telling me the thing of which I wished the most to know? If you think I write too often, your only way is to tell me so, or at least to write to me again that I may know you don't quite forget me; for I very much fear that I never employ a thought of yours now except when you are reading my letters, which makes me ply you with them. If you are very happy, it is ill-natured of you not to tell me so, except 'tis what is inconsistent with mine. But why don't you talk to me, that you know will please me. I have often heard you say that you would willingly

* The doctor's agent at Laracor, a Frenchman.

suffer a little uneasiness provided it gave another a vast deal of pleasure. Pray remember this maxim, because it makes for me. This is now the fourth letter I have wrote to you: they could not miscarry, for they were all under Mr Lewis' cover, nor could you avoid opening them for the same reason. . . . Pray let me hear from you soon which will be an inexpressible joy to her that is always. . . .

Many other sad letters of this noble, kind, self-sacrificing and womanly nature were written by Esther Vanhomrigh to Jonathan Swift, but their effect on him was little or nothing: no echo of responsive affection or decent compassion is heard in any of his replies.

'I had your splenetic letter,' he writes on July 8, 1713, with cruel conciseness, and his subsequent correspondence is equally cold. Esther in the meantime asks, 'Have you one thought of me?' She complains that he deserts her in her misfortune, that his frowns make her life unportable and then—

Dublin, 1714.

Well! now, I plainly see how great a regard you have for me. You bid me be easy and

you'd see me as often as you could ; you had better have said as often as you could get the better of your inclinations so much, or as often as you remembered there was such a person in the world.

If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. 'Tis impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last ; I am sure I could have *born* (sic) the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more, but these resolves to your misfortune did not last long ; for there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it and beg you'd see me, and speak kindly to me, for I am sure you would not condemn anyone to suffer what I have done could you but know it.

The reason I write to you is because I cannot tell it you should I see you, for when I begin to complain then you are angry and there is something in your look so awful that it strikes me dumb.

Oh ! that you may but have so much regard for me left that this complaint may touch your soul with pity.

I say as little as ever I can. Did you but

know what I thought I am sure it would move you.

Forgive me, and believe me I cannot help telling you this and live.

Perhaps, nay certainly, in the whole necklace of love letters strung together and brought into close communion on this common string, there is none nearly so sincere, so pathetic and so true to woman's nature as that which has been just quoted.

From the date of this the tone of her epistles is altered, the *spretæ injuria formæ* produces sounds of harsh menace and unkindly threatening which, however natural, are wholly to be deplored. Now she has too much spirit to sit down contented with her treatment, she has determined to try all manner of human arts to reclaim him and if these fail to have recourse to the black one.

Swift is frightened—we read that easily between the lines of his next letter—and flatters her. He wonders how a brat* who cannot read can write so well, she is a desperate chip* and he sends her the following verses :—

Nymph, would you learn the only art
To keep a worthy lover's heart ;
First to adorn your person well,
In utmost cleanliness excel :

* Swift's tenderness, real or assumed, was expressed, as the reader will have seen in his letters to Stella, by terms which would now be regarded in the light of insults.

And though you must the fashions take,
 Observe them but for fashions sake.
 The strongest reason will submit
 To virtue, honour, sense and wit :
 To such a nymph the wise and good
 Cannot be faithless if they would ;
 For vices all have different ends,
 But virtue still to virtue tends.
 And when your lover is not true,
 'Tis virtue fails in him, or you ;
 And either he deserves disdain,
 Or you without a cause complain :
 But here Vanessa cannot err,
 Nor are those rules applied to her.
 For who could such a nymph forsake,
 Except a blockhead or a rake ;
 Or how could she her heart bestow,
 Except where wit and virtue grow.

The next letter from Vanessa shows with what satisfaction and confidence she swallowed this alluring bait of rhyme. She writes from her house near Cellbridge, whither, says Scott, she had retired 'to nurse her hopeless passion in seclusion from the world.' In the year 1720 Swift came to see her there and continued visiting her till she died.

Cellbridge, 1720.

—— * CAD,—You are good beyond expression
 and I will never quarrel again if I can help it.

* This stroke signifies everything that may be said to *Cad* at the beginning or conclusion.—Swift.

. . . We have had a vast deal of thunder and lightning—where do you think I wished to be then? and do you think that 'twas the only time I wished so since I saw you? . . . I am now as happy as I can be without seeing — CAD, I beg you will continue happiness to your own Skinage.*

Swift's next letter is written in—well, we will call it French.

May 12, 1719.

Croyez moi, s'il y a chose croyable au monde, que je pense tout ce que vous pouvez souhaiter de moy, et que tous vos desirs seront obei, comme de commandmens qu'il sera impossible de violer, . . . Je vous fais des complimens sur votre perfection dans la langue Françoise, il faut vous connoître long tems de connoître toutes vos perfections. . . Il n'y a rien à redire dans l'orthographe, la propriété, l'elegance, le douceur, et l'esprit et que je suis sot, moy de vous repondre la même langage, vous qui estes incapable d'aucune sottise; si se n'est l'estime qu'il vous plaît d'avoir pour moy. . . Quelles bestes en jûppes sont, les plus excellentes de celles que je vois semées dans le monde, au prix de vous; en les

* A return of Swift to the 'little language.' In the same Vanessa becomes 'Governour Huff.'

voyant, en les entendant, je dis cent fois le jour,
—ne parlez, ne regardez, ne pensez, ne faites rien
comme ces miserables.

Oct. 15 1720.

FOR MADAME HESTER VANHOMRI.

. . . I am in much concern for poor
Molkin,* and the more because I am sure you
are so too. You ought to be as cheerful as you
can for both your sakes, and read pleasant things
that will make you laugh and not sit moping with
your elbows on your knees on a little stool by the
fire. It is most infallible that riding would do
Molkin more good than any other thing, provided
fair days and warm clothes be provided, and so it
would to you; and if you lose any skin, you
know Job says, 'Skin for skin will a man give
for his life,' it is either Job or Satan says so, for
ought you know . . . I am now sitting at
home alone and will go write to Molkins. So
adieu!

Once more the kaleidoscope shifts—Vanessa
writes that she has not seen — for ten long
weeks, nor heard from him save once only. It

* Vanessa's sister, from the frequent reference to her in his letters seems
to have attracted to herself some share of the Dean's wandering love.

is not in the power of time or accident to lessen the inexpressible passion which she has for ——. The love she bears him is not only seated in her soul, there is not a single atom of her frame which is not blended with it. She has worn out her days in sighing, and her nights with watching and thinking of ——, who thinks not of her.

‘How many letters,’ writes this unhappy woman, ‘How many letters must I send you before I shall receive an answer? Can you deny me in my misery the only comfort which I can expect at present? Oh that I could hope to see you here, or that I could go to you. I was born with violent passions which terminate all in one inexpressible passion I have for you. Consider the killing emotions which I feel from your neglect, and show some tenderness for me, or I shall lose my senses. . . . I firmly believe could I know your thoughts (which no human creature is capable of guessing at, because never anyone living thought like you) I should find you have often in a rage wished me religious, hoping then I should have paid my devotions to Heaven; but that would not spare you, for were I an enthusiast, still you’d be the deity I should worship. What marks are there of a deity, but what you are to be known by. You are at present everywhere; your dear image is always before mine eyes.

Is it not more reasonable to adore a radiant form one has seen, than one only described ?

And her deity's letter begins thus :—

Four o'clock.

I dined with the Provost, and told him I was coming here, because I must be at prayers at six. . . . I cannot possibly call after prayers. I therefore came here in the afternoon while people were in church, hoping certainly to find you. I am truly affected for poor Moll, who is a girl of infinite value, and I am sure you will take all possible care of her. . . .

VANESSA'S LAST LETTER.

— CAD,—I thought you had quite forgot both me and your promise of writing to me. Was it not very unkind to be five weeks absent without sending me one line to let me know you were well, and remembered me ?

. . . One day this week I was to visit a great lady where I found a very great assembly of ladies and beaux (dressed as I suppose to a nicety). . . Their forms and gestures were very like those of baboons and monkeys. . . . While I was wishing myself in the country with

—, one of these animals snatched my fan, and was so pleased with me that it seized me with such a panic that I apprehended nothing less than being carried up to the top of the house, and served as a friend of yours was,* but in this — one of their own species came in, upon which they all began to make their grimaces, which opportunity I took, and made my escape. . . .

I do declare I have so little joy in life, that I don't care how soon mine ends. For God's sake write me soon, and kindly, for in your absence, your letters are all the joy I have on earth, and sure you are too good-natured to grudge one hour in a week to make any human creature happy.—
Cad, think of me and pity me.

SWIFT'S LAST LETTER TO VANESSA.

. . . I had your last with a splendid account of your law affairs. . . . When you are melancholy, read diverting or amusing books: it is my receipt and seldom fails. Health, good humour, and fortune are all that is valuable in this life, and the last contributes to the two former. . . . I desire you will not venture to shake me by the hand, for I am in mortal fear of the itch, and have no hope left, but that some ugly vermin

* Gulliver's Travels were not published until 1746. Vanessa must have read the MSS.

called ticks have got into my skin, of which I have pulled out some, and must scratch out the rest. Is not this enough to give me the spleen? for I doubt no Christian family will receive me; and this is all a man gets by a northern journey. . . . Yesterday I rode twenty-nine miles without being weary, and I wish little *Heskinage* could do as much. . . . How do you wear away the time? Is it among the fields and groves of your country seat, or among your cousins in town, or thinking in a train that will be sure to vex you, and then reasoning and forming teasing conclusions from mistaken thoughts? The best company for you is a philosopher, whom you would regard as much as a sermon. . . . What a foolish thing is time, and how foolish is man, who would be as angry if time stop't, as if it pressed! But I will not proceed at this rate; for I am writing and thinking myself fast into a spleen, which is the only thing that I would not compliment you by imitating. So adieu till the next place I fix in (if I fix at all till I return, and that I leave to fortune and the weather).

Vanessa who must have heard of Swift's relations to Stella at last wrote to that lady asking her to explain the precise nature of these

relations. Stella informed her of her marriage and sent her letter to Swift. It is well known how Swift rode instantly to Cellbridge, threw Vanessa's letter on the table and returned to Dublin. The lady is popularly supposed to have died in consequence of this visit. She certainly lived no long time after it.

She revoked a will made in favour of Swift, and like Stella gave her fortune to strangers.

With regard to Swift's loves Scott's words are of weight. He might, says the novelist, seek the society of Vanessa without the apprehension of exciting passions to which he was himself insensible; and his separation from Stella, after marriage, might be a matter equally of choice or of necessity. This much at least is certain that if according to a saying which Swift highly approved, desire produces love in man, we cannot find any one line in Swift's writings or correspondence intimating his having felt such a source of passion. The sense of decency which uniformly gave way before the slightest temptation to exercise his wit, would scarce have restrained him from expressing voluptuous as well as disgusting ideas; and that he has nowhere done so, but uniformly expatiated on those of an opposite tendency is perhaps the strongest confirmation of the above conjecture. There is not a single

anecdote recorded of his life which indicates his having submitted to what he irreverently terms 'that ridiculous passion which has no being but in play books or romances.' So far Scott, the reader will form his or certainly her own opinion. The following lines are fairly well known

But what success Vanessa met,
Is to the world a secret yet, &c.





WORTLEY MONTAGU.

LADY WORTLEY MONTAGU

1762

THE marriage licence of Edward Wortley and Lady Mary Pierrepont, is dated August 16, 1712, and their elopement, no doubt, took place soon afterwards. Mr Wortley had peculiar attractions ; for he was a man of learning, a friend and associate of the most eminent literary men of his day ;—Addison and Steele being among his most intimate acquaintances. Lady Mary was in her twenty-fourth year, when her father, regardless of her sentiments, proceeded to choose a husband for his daughter. Who this intended husband was does not appear ; but he is mentioned as ‘Mr K.’ and his estates appear to have been in Ireland ; and Lady Mary speaks of him as a man she hated. Accordingly she rejected her father’s choice ; and, when all her family were

against her marrying the man she really loved, she determined to fly. Provided with a wedding licence and a clergyman, Mr Wortley was to await her in a coach near her father's house.

TO MR WORTLEY MONTAGU

March 28, 1710.

Perhaps you'll be surprised at this letter; I have had many debates with myself before I could resolve on it. I know it is not acting in form, but I do not look upon you as I do upon the rest of the world, and by what I do for *you*, you are not to judge my manner of acting with others. You are brother to a woman I tenderly loved; my protestations of friendship are not like other people's, I never speak but what I mean, and when I say I love, 'tis for ever. . . .

Give me leave to say it, (I know it sounds vain) I know how to make a man of sense happy; but then that man must resolve to contribute something towards it himself. I have so much esteem for you, I should be very sorry to hear you were unhappy; but for the world I would not be the instrument of making you so; which (of the humour you are) is hardly to be avoided if I am your wife. . . .

You distrust me—I can neither be easy, nor

loved, where I am distrusted. Nor do I believe your passion for me is what you pretend it ; at least I am sure was I in love I could not talk as you do. Few women would have spoken so plainly as I have done,—but to dissemble is among the things I never do. I take more pains to approve my conduct to myself than to the world ; and would not have to accuse myself of a minute's deceit.

I wish I loved you enough to devote myself to be for ever miserable, for the pleasure of a day or two's happiness. I cannot resolve upon it. You must think otherwise of me, or not at all.


I don't enjoin you to burn this letter. I know you will. 'Tis the first I ever writ to one of your sex, and shall be the last. You must never expect another. I resolve against all correspondence of the kind ; my resolutions are seldom made, and never broken.

How well she kept her promise the next letter will show :—

TO MR WORTLEY MONTAGU

[*Postmark, 'April 25,' 1710.*]

I have this minute received your two letters. I know not how to direct you, whether to London or the country. 'Tis very likely you will never



receive this. I hazard a great deal if it falls into other hands, and I write for all that.

I wish with all my soul I thought as you do ; I endeavour to convince myself by your arguments, and am sorry my reason is so obstinate, not to be deluded into an opinion, that 'tis impossible a man can esteem a woman. I suppose I should then be very easy at your thoughts of me ; I should thank you for the wit and beauty you give me, and not be angry at the follies and weaknesses ; but, to my infinite affliction, I can believe neither one nor t'other.

One part of my character is not so good, nor t'other so bad, as you fancy it. Should we ever live together, you would be disappointed both ways ; you would find an easy equality of temper you do not expect, and a thousand faults you do not imagine.

You think, if you married me, I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next. Neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. Expect all that is complaisant and easy, but never what is fond, in me. You judge very wrong of my heart when you suppose me capable of views of interest, and that anything could oblige me to flatter anybody.

Was I the most indigent creature in the

world, I should answer you as I do now, without adding or diminishing. I am incapable of art, and 'tis because I will not be capable of it. Could I deceive one minute, I should never regain my own good opinion; and who could bear to live with one they despised?

If you can resolve to live with a companion that will have all the deference due to your superiority of good sense, and that your proposals can be agreeable to those on whom I depend, I have nothing to say against them.

As to travelling, 'tis what I should do with great pleasure, and could easily quit London upon your account, but a retirement in the country is not so disagreeable to me, as I know a few months would make it tiresome to you. Where people are tied for life it is their natural interest not to grow weary of one another. If I had all the personal charms that I want, a face is too slight a foundation for happiness.

You would be soon tired with seeing every day the same thing. Where you saw nothing else, you would have leisure to remark all the defects, which would increase in proportion as the novelty lessened, which is always a great charm. I should have the displeasure of seeing a coldness which, though I could not reasonably blame you for, being involuntary, yet it would render me

uneasy ; and the more because I know a love may be revived which absence, inconstancy, or even infidelity, has extinguished ; but there is no returning from a *dégoût* given by satiety.

I should not chuse to live in a crowd : I could be very well pleased to be in London, without making a great figure, or seeing above eight or nine agreeable people. Apartments, table, etc., are things that never come into my head. But [I] will never think of anything without the consent of my family, and advise you not to fancy a happiness in entire solitude, which you would find only fancy.

Make no answer to this, if you can like me on my own terms. 'Tis not to me you must make the proposals, if not, to what purpose is our correspondence ? However, preserve me your friendship, which I think of with a great deal of pleasure, and some vanity. If ever you see me married, I flatter myself you'll see a conduct you would not be sorry your wife should imitate.

Throughout the correspondence it would seem that Mr Wortley pursued a course which was in some degree ungenerous. As Mr Moy Thomas remarks, 'he resorted to an infinite variety of artifices, generally deemed more or less pardon-

able on such occasions, for obtaining a direct avowal of her love for him ; but when he had succeeded he was never tired of extorting from her new confessions.'

Lady Montagu 'had no weapon against these stratagems; but occasionally a show of anger and a determination to see him no more, which upon a kinder letter from him soon melted away.' Accordingly the next letter explains itself.

TO MR WORTLEY MONTAGU

[*About November 1710*].

Indeed I do not at all wonder that absence, and variety of new faces, should make you forget me ; but I am a little surprised at your curiosity to know what passes in my heart (a thing wholly insignificant to you), except you propose to yourself a piece of ill-natured satisfaction, in finding me very much disquieted.

Pray which way would you see into my heart ? You can frame no guesses about it from either my speaking or writing ; and supposing I should attempt to show it you, I know no other way. I begin to be tired of my humility ; I have carried my complaisance to you farther than I ought. You make new scruples, you have a great deal of fancy, and your distrusts being all of your own

making, are more immovable than if there was some real ground for them.

Our aunts and grandmothers always tell us that men are a sort of animals, that if ever they are constant, 'tis only when they are ill-used. 'Twas a kind of paradox I could never believe; experience has taught me the truth of it. You are the first I ever had a correspondence with, and I thank God I have done with it for all my life.

You needed not to have told me you are not what you have been, one must be stupid not to find a difference in your letters. You seem, in one part of your last, to excuse yourself from having done me any injury in point of fortune. Do I accuse you of any?

I have not spirits to dispute any longer with you. You say you are not yet determined. Let me determine for you, and save you the trouble of writing again. Adieu for ever! make no answer. I wish, among the variety of acquaintance, you may find some one to please you; and can't help the vanity of thinking, should you try them all, you won't find one that will be so sincere in their treatment, though a thousand more deserving, and every one happier.

'Tis a piece of vanity and injustice I never forgive in a woman, to delight to give pain; what

must I think of a man that takes pleasure in making me uneasy? After the folly of letting you know it is in your power, I ought in prudence to let this go no farther, except I thought you had a good nature enough never to make use of the power. I have no reason to think so: however, I am willing, you see, to do you the highest obligation 'tis possible for me to do; that is, to give you a fair occasion of being rid of me.

The following letter is written in much the same strain.

TO MR WORTLEY MONTAGU

(*Indorsed 'Feb. 26,' 1711.*)

I intended to make no answer to your letter; it was something very ungrateful, and I resolved to give over all thoughts of you. I could easily have performed that resolve some time ago, but then you took pains to please me; now you have brought me to esteem you, you make use of that esteem to give me uneasiness; and I have the displeasure of seeing I esteem a man that dislikes me. Farewell then: since you will have it so, I renounce all the ideas I have so long flattered myself with, and will entertain my fancy no longer with the imaginary pleasure of seeing you.

I fondly thought fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration, rather the fatigues of life; and that true happiness was justly defined by Mr Dryden (pardon the romantic air of repeating verses) when he says,

‘Whom Heav’n would bless it does from pomps remove,
And makes their wealth in privacy and love.’

According to this scheme I proposed to pass my life with you. I yet do you the justice to believe, if any man could have been contented with this manner of living it would have been you.

Your indifference to me does not hinder me from thinking you capable of tenderness, and the happiness of friendship, but I find it is not to me you’ll ever have them. You think me all that is detestable; you accuse me of want of sincerity and generosity. To convince you of your mistake I’ll show you the last extremes of both.

While I foolishly fancied you loved me, (which I confess I had never any great reason for, more than that I wished it) there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I may say loved, since it is the last thing I’ll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I’ll never see you more. I shall

avoid all public places; and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write be not displeased if I send it back unopened. I shall force my inclinations to oblige yours; and remember that you have told me I could not oblige you more than by refusing you. Had I intended ever to see you again, I durst not have sent this letter. Adieu.

The next letter is important, containing an account of her father's proposals that she should marry a man of his choice, regardless of her sentiments. The critical moment had arrived when her lover must find some solution of the difficulty or renounce all hope.

TO MR WORTLEY MONTAGU.

[*About July 4, 1712*]

I am going to write you a plain long letter. What I have already told you is nothing but the truth. . . . I wanted courage to resist at first the will of my relations; but as every day added to my fears, those, at last, grew strong enough to make me venture the disobliging them. I knew the folly of my own temper, and took the method of writing to the disposer of me. I said everything in this letter I thought proper to move him, and proffered, in atonement for not marrying

whom he would, never to marry at all. He did not think fit to answer this letter, but sent for me to him. He told me he was very much surprised that I did not depend on his judgment for my future happiness, that he knew nothing I had to complain of, etc. ; that he did not doubt I had some other fancy in my head, which encouraged me to this disobedience ; but he assured me, if I refused a settlement he had provided for me, he gave me his word, whatever proposals were made him, he would never so much as enter into a treaty with any other ; that if I founded any hopes upon his death I should find myself mistaken ; he never intended to leave me anything but an annuity of £400 per annum ; that though another would proceed in this manner after I had given so just a pretence for it, yet he had [the] goodness to leave my destiny yet in my own choice, and at the same time commanded me to communicate my design to my relations, and ask their advice.

As hard as this may sound, it did not shock my resolution ; I was pleased to think, at any price, I had it in my power to be free from a man I hated. I told my intentions to all my nearest relations. I was surprised at their blaming it, to the greatest degree. I was told they were sorry I would ruin myself ; but if I was so unreasonable,

they could not blame my father whatever he inflicted on me.

I objected I did not love him. They made answer, they found no necessity of loving; if I lived well with him, that was all was required of me; and that if I considered this town, I should find very few women in love with their husbands, and yet a many happy. It was in vain to dispute with such prudent people; they looked upon me as a little romantic.

However they could not change my thoughts, though I found I was to expect no protection from them. When I was to give my final answer to — [sic], I told him that I preferred a single life to any other; and, if he pleased to permit me, I would make that resolution. He replied, he could not hinder my resolutions, but I should not pretend after that to please him; since pleasing him was only to be done by obedience; that if I would disobey I knew the consequences. He would not fail to confine me where I might repent at leisure; that he had also consulted my relations, and found them all agreeing in his sentiments.

I retired to my chamber, where I writ a letter to let him know my aversion to the man proposed was too great to be overcome, that I should be miserable beyond all things could be imagined,

but I was in his hands, and he might dispose of me as he thought fit. He was perfectly satisfied with this answer, and proceeded as if I had given him a willing consent. I forgot to tell you, he named you, and said if I thought that way, I was very much mistaken; that if he had no other engagements, yet he would never have agreed to your proposals, having no inclination to see his grandchildren beggars. . . .

I have told you all my affairs with plain sincerity. I have avoided to move your compassion, and I have said nothing of what I suffer; and I have not persuaded you to a *treaty*, which I am sure my family will never agree to. I can have no fortune without an entire obedience.

Whatever your business is, may it end to your satisfaction. I think of the public as you do. As little as *that* is a woman's care, it may be permitted into the number of a woman's fears. But, wretched as I am, I have no more to fear for myself. I have still a concern for my friends, and I am in pain for your danger. I am far from taking ill what you say, I never valued myself as the daughter of — [*sic.*], and ever despised those that esteemed me on that account. With pleasure I could barter all that, and change to be any country gentleman's daughter that would have reason enough to make happiness in privacy. My letter

is too long. I beg your pardon. You may see by the situation of my affairs 'tis without design.

The next letter of course refers to their suggested elopement.

Thursday Night, Aug. 12, 1712.

If I am always to be as well pleased as I am with this letter, I enter upon a state of perfect happiness in complying with you.

I am sorry I cannot do it entirely as to Friday or Saturday. I will tell you the reason of it. I have a relation that has ever shewed an uncommon partiality for me.* I have generally trusted him with all my thoughts and I have always found him sincerely my friend. On the occasion of this marriage he received my complaints with the greatest degree of tenderness. He proffered me to disoblige my father (by representing to him the hardship he was doing) if I thought it would be of any service to me; and, when he heard me in some passion of grief assure him it could do me no good, he went yet farther, and asked me if there was any other man, though of a smaller fortune, I could be happy with; and how much soever it should be against the will of my other relations, assured me he would assist me

* Perhaps her maternal uncle, William Fielding.

in making me happy after my own way. This is an obligation I can never forget, and I think I should have cause to reproach myself if I did this without letting him know it. He knows you and I believe will approve of it. You guess whom I mean. . . . I could wish you would leave England, but I know not how to object against anything that pleases you. In this minute I have no will that does not agree with yours.

Saturday Morning [Aug. 1712.]

I begin to fear again ; I own myself a coward. I am afraid you flatter yourself that my (father) may be at length reconciled and brought to reasonable terms. I am convinced by what I have often heard him say, speaking of other cases like this, he never will. . . . He will have a thousand plausible reasons for being irreconcilable, and 'tis very probable the world will be of his side.

Reflect now for the last time in what manner you must take me. I shall come to you with only a night-gown and petticoat, and that is all you will get with me.

I told a lady of my friends what I intend to do. You will think her a very good friend when I tell you she has proffered to lend us her house if we would come there for the first night. I did

not accept of this till I had let you know of it. If you think it more convenient to carry me to your lodgings, make no scruple of it. Let it be where it will; if I am your wife I shall think no place unfit for me where you are. I beg we may leave London next morning, wherever you intend to go. I should wish to go out of England if it suits with your affairs.

You are the best judge of your father's temper. If you think it would be obliging to him, or necessary for you, I will go with you immediately to ask his pardon and his blessing. . . . But I cannot think of living in the midst of my relations and acquaintance after so unjustifiable a step: unjustifiable to the world,—but I think I can justify myself to myself.

I again beg of you to hire a coach to be at the door early Monday morning, to carry us some part of our way, wherever you resolve our journey shall be.

If you determine to go to that lady's house, you had better come with a coach and six at seven o'clock to-morrow. She and I will be in the balcony that looks on the road; you have nothing to do but to stop under it, and we will come down to you.

After all, think very seriously. Your letter, which will be waited for, is to determine every-

thing. I forgive you a coarse expression in your last, which, however, I wish had not been there. You might have said something like it without expressing it in that manner. . . . You can show me no goodness I shall not be sensible of.

However, think again, and resolve never to think of me if you have the least doubt, or that it is likely to make you uneasy in your fortune.

'Tis something odd for a woman that brings nothing to expect anything. . . . I had rather die than return to a dependancy upon relations I have disobliged. Save me from that fear if you love me. If you cannot, or think I ought not to expect it, be sincere and tell me so.

'Tis better I should not be yours at all, than for a short happiness, involve myself in ages of misery. I entirely depend on your honour, and I cannot suspect you of any way doing wrong. Do not imagine I shall be angry at anything you can tell me. Let it be sincere; do not impose on a woman that leaves all things for you.

Friday Night, 15th August 1712.

I tremble for what we are doing. Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope.

I foresee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall incense my family in the highest degree.



LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— will invent a thousand stories of me. Yet, 'tis possible you may recompense everything to me.

In this letter which I am fond of, you promise me all that I wish. Since I writ so far, I received your Friday letter.

I will be only yours, and I will do what you please.

You shall hear from me again to-morrow, not to contradict, but to give some directions. My resolution is taken. Love me and use me well.

The following love-ballad was written by Lady Montagu to Wm. Congreve for whom, as is well known, she had a deep affection. Indeed how strong her love was may be seen from her own words :

At length, by so much importunity press'd,
 Take, Congreve, at once the inside of my breast,
 This stupid indiff'rence so often you blame,
 Is not owing to nature, to fear, or to shame :
 I am not as cold as a virgin in lead,
 Nor are Sunday's sermons so strong in my head :
 I know but too well how time flies along,
 That we live but few years, and yet fewer are young.

How I hate to be cheated, and never will buy
 Long years of repentance for moments of joy.
 Oh ! was there a man (but where shall I find
 Good sense and good nature so equally join'd ?)

Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine ;
 Not meanly would boast, nor lewdly design ;
 Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
 For I would have the power, though not give the pain.

No pedant, yet learned ; no rake-helly gay,
 Or laughing, because he has nothing to say ;
 To all my whole sex obliging and free,
 Yet never be fond of any but me ;
 In public preserve the decorum that's just,
 And shew in his eyes he is true to his trust.
 Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
 But not fulsomely pert, nor yet foppishly low.

But when the long hours of public are past,
 And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last.
 May every fond pleasure that moment endear,
 Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear !
 Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
 He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
 Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
 And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.

And that my delight may be solidly fix'd,
 Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mix'd ;
 In whose tender bosom my soul may confide
 Whose kindness can soothe me, whose counsel can guide.
 From such a dear lover as here I describe,
 No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe ;
 But till this astonishing creature I know,
 As I long have liv'd chaste, I will keep myself so.

I never will share with the wanton coquette,
 Or be caught by a vain affectation of wit,
 The toasters and songsters may try all their art,
 But never shall enter the pass of my heart.
 I loathe the lewd rake, the dress'd fopling despise,
 Before such pursuers the nice virgin flies ;
 And as Ovid has sweetly in parable told,
 We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

LAURENCE STERNE

1768

LAURENCE STERNE is distinguished by three principal amours, in which he wrote love letters to the objects of his regard. The first of these was Elizabeth Lumley, of Staffordshire, who afterwards became his wife; the second, Catherine Formantel, or Fourmantel, or De Fourmantel; the third, Eliza or Elizabeth Draper. The last of these has been called his *grande passion*, apparently without due and sufficient reason, for all Sterne's passions were grand.

The first series of correspondence the public owes to the tender care of his pious daughter, one Lydia Sterne de Medalle, who states in the preface to 'The Letters of the late Laurence Sterne to his most intimate Friends,' published by A. Millar, W. Law, and R. Carter, in 1794, that in giving to the world these letters of a 'privacy the most sacred' she does but comply with her mother's request, which was that if any letters were pub-

lished under Mr Sterne's name, those she had in her possession, as well as those that her father's friends would be kind enough to send her, should be likewise published, adding that she depends on the 'candour of the public' for their favourable reception.

Mrs Sterne is commonly addressed before her marriage as 'My L.' Sterne calls her his 'contemplative girl,' and speaks of the happy modification of matter by which every brick and window-pane of her lodging can remain insensible to her loss when she leaves it.

'Among the MSS. collected by my father,' writes Mr John Murray in an appendix to an edition of the Works of Sterne,* in four vols., by James P. Brown, M.D., 'was a series of thirteen letters which appear to have been obtained by him from a lady named Weston. The letters introduce us to a character apparently unknown to all Sterne's biographers, but intimately connected with him by a tie of the nature of which they would appear to leave no manner of doubt.†

Eliza Draper, Sterne's third love, historically speaking, appears to have been animated by the same generous principles of conduct in the publication of the letters addressed to her, as influenced Mrs Sterne and her good daughter.

* Works of Sterne. † This character is Miss Catherine Fourmantel.

‘I would wish,’ says Sterne, in one of his first epistles to his future wife, ‘to steal from the world and live in a little sun-gilt cottage on the side of a romantic hill.’ This he desired in order apparently to contemplate with greater ease and under more pleasing circumstances the idea of his beloved. He compares himself—or her, it is not quite clear which—to a polyanthus sheltered by a friendly wall from the colds of December. He was seriously smitten. ‘The hour you left D’ Estelle,’ a name given to the venue of their interviews, ‘I took to my bed.’ Even the face of one who had known them both, a certain Miss S., whose real name is as much a mystery as the destination of the orange peel hoarded by Dr Johnson—‘rent him to pieces,’ and caused him to ‘burst into tears a dozen times in one hour,’ once every five minutes, if these lachrymal effusions were regular. ‘Thou will hold me thine,’ says Laurence to Elizabeth, ‘while virtue and faith hold this world together.’ And then he suddenly remembers some evening duty, and as he poetically puts it—‘the vesper bell calls me from thee to my God.’

So far so good, but mark the change when the man is married. ‘For God’s sake’ writes the husband, ‘rise early and gallop away in the cool’ and ‘always see that you have not forgot your baggage,’ and then come careful directions about

the manufacture of Scotch snuff. Then 'drink small Rhenish to keep you cool'—he was not formerly so desirous of this coolness—'God in Heaven prosper and go along with you.' On May 31, 1762 he writes a letter of which part of the burden is Scotch snuff, part special advice to her to take care of heating her blood. On June 14, 1762 he conjures her to let her portmanteau be tied on the—'fore-part of her chaise for fear of a dog's trick'—and writing from Paris three days later, he asks her to buy a 'copper kettle which will hold two quarts.'

From 'genteel rooms in ye Pall Mall,' Sterne writes to Catherine Fourmantel a Huguenot refugee, and descendant of a family that styled themselves Beranger de Fourmantel, and owned property in Saint Domingo of which they were deprived by the measures consequent on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. An elder sister of Catherine conformed to the Roman Catholic religion, returned to Paris and was reinstated in her family property. The younger, Catherine herself at the date of this correspondence, was living in York, where Sterne, as is known, held a prebendal stall.

Few of the letters bear dates—some seem

written from York, others from London, whither 'dear dear Kitty' followed the prebend, and letter is addressed to her accordingly Merds Court, St Anne, Soho. There is no certainty about the end of Miss Fourmantel. Her friend Mrs Weston maintained that she knew Sterne before her marriage, that he courted her five years and then married some one else, that in consequence Miss Fourmantel became insane and died in a lunatic asylum at Paris, that Sterne visited her before her decease and drew from her case some of the traits which he has thrown into the character of Maria of the 'Sentimental Journey.' The young lady was thus useful to him to the last, if her friend Mrs Weston is to be believed. Mr John Murray, to whom this book is indebted for the above account, says, in refutation of these statements, it will suffice to bear in mind that Sterne was married in 1740—twenty years before the date of this correspondence.

In his first letter to Kitty, written probably in 1760, he begs the lady's acceptance of a few bottles of Calcavillo which he has ordered his man to leave at her dore (*sic*). In another he says, 'If this billet catches you in bed you are a lazy, sleepy little slut,' tells her she is 'sweeter than honey,' that he 'loves her to distraction and will love her to eternity.' Again he sends her sweet-

meats and more honey 'neither of them half so sweet as herself' and if she grows 'sour on this declaration' tells her he will 'send her a pot of pickles.' This letter is signed by the Prebendary of the Church of York—with considerable humour to one who knows his story,—*Qui ne changera pas que en Mourant.* L.S. Yorick was ever proud of his French. Then he sends her a sermon taking occasion to compare Kitty's heart with that of the prophet Elijah. Then 'God will open a *Dore*' his attachment to this orthography is touching, 'when we shall sometime be much more together and enjoy our desires without fear or interruption.' The *Dore* would seem to be the decease of Mrs Sterne. On the whole what with his 'sweet lass,' his 'yours for ever and ever,' his 'dear, enchanting slut, for a squeeze of whose hand he would give a guinea' there is more of the nature of ardent love in these letters than in any written by Sterne.

And now passing over my Lady Percy, to whom we find one letter addressed not deficient in heat—and the many amours of town and country unbodied in correspondence, we come to the last liaison of him who has been called a man of business in amours and a lover rather than a parson by profession. It is a common observation, he says in one of his letters, that married

people seldom extend their regards beyond their own fireside, this is he adds 'perhaps too true.' In his own case it was not true enough.

In 1766 a plain woman from Bombay rises at first nebulous, but soon a star of the first magnitude in Sterne's erotic heaven. Eliza Draper was the wife of a Bombay lawyer. She from debility and ill health was sent over to England. She came, she saw, she conquered. Sterne her 'Brahmin' her 'Yorick' (the former title has at least the merit of novelty in his love letters) immediately discovered in her 'a mind congenial with his own.' He sat down and laid siege to her with many letters. She died in England in 1778. In Bristol Cathedral is a legend that a certain spot is sacred to the memory of Mrs Elizabeth Draper,—Eliza and Elizabeth are continually being confused—'in whom genius and benevolence were united.' The latter quality is surely sufficiently proved by the publication of her lover's letters. 'If it is asked,' says the editor of the first publication of these documents, 'whether the glowing heat of Mr Sterne's affection never transported him to a flight beyond the limits of pure Platonism, the publisher will not take upon him absolutely to deny it.'

Sterne commences well and economically with a gift of a volume of his own sermons. He tells

her that her soft and gentle nature would civilize savages, adding however—perhaps with a recollection of her husband—‘Though pity were it thou shouldst be tainted with the office.’ He apostrophizes her as the ‘Best of God’s works.’ ‘Love me,’ he says, ‘I beseech thee, and remember me for ever,’ and then out of a tender care for her health reminds her that there is ‘nothing so pernicious as white lead,’ of which the explanation is that her cabin in the ship in which she was to return to Bombay had been freshly painted.

The following letters are selected from Sterne’s varied amatory correspondence.

TO ELIZA LUMLEY.

Before now my L. has lodged an indictment against me in the High Court of Friendship. I plead guilty to the charge and entirely submit to the mercy of that amiable tribunal. Let this mitigate my punishment, if it will not expiate my transgression. Do not say that I shall offend again in the same manner, though a too easy pardon sometimes occasions a repetition of the same fault.

A Miser says, though I do no good with my

money to-day, to-morrow shall be marked with some deed of beneficence. The Libertine says, let me enjoy this week in forbidden and luxurious pleasures, and the next I will dedicate to serious thought and reflection. The Gamester says, let me have one more chance with the dice and I will never touch them more. The Knave of every profession wishes to obtain but independency and he will become an honest man. The Female Coquette triumphs in tormenting her *inamorato*, for fear after marriage he should not pity her.

The apparition of the fifth instant (for letters may almost be called so) proved more welcome as I did not expect it. Oh my L. thou art kind indeed to make an apology for me, and thou never wilt assuredly repent of one act of kindness—for being thy debtor, I will pay thee with interest.

Why does my L. complain of the desertion of friends? Where does the human being live that will not join in the complaint? It is a common observation, and perhaps too true, that married people seldom extend their regards beyond their own fireside. There is such a thing as parsimony in esteem, as well as money; yet as one costs nothing, it might be bestowed with more liberality. We cannot gather grapes from thorns, so

we must not expect kind attachment from persons who are wholly folded up in selfish schemes.

I do not know whether I most despise or pity such characters. Nature never made an unkind creature, ill-usage and bad habits have deformed a fair and lovely creation.

My L! thou art surrounded by all the melancholy gloom of winter; wert thou alone, the retirement would be agreeable. Disappointed ambition might envy such a retreat, and disappointed love would seek it out. Crowded towns and busy societies may delight the unthinking and the gay, but solitude is the best nurse of wisdom.

Methinks I see my contemplative girl now in the garden, watching the gradual approaches of spring. Dost not thou mark with delight the first vernal buds; the snowdrop and primrose, these early and welcome visitors spring beneath thy feet. Flora and Pomona already consider thee as their handmaid, and in a little time will load thee with their sweetest blessing. The feathered race are all thy own; and with their untaught harmony will soon begin to cheer thy morning and evening walks.

Sweet as this may be, return! return! The birds of Yorkshire will tune their pipes, and sing as melodiously as those of Staffordshire.

Adieu, my beloved L! Thine too much for my *peace*.

L. STERNE.

TO ELIZA LUMLEY.

I have offended her whom I so tenderly love!—What could tempt me to it!

But if a beggar was to knock at thy gate, would (*sic*) thou not open the door and be melted with compassion? I know thou wouldst. Pity has erected a temple in thy bosom. Sweetest and best of all human passions! let thy web of tenderness cover the pensive form of affliction, and soften the darkest shades of misery!

I have reconsidered the apology, and alas! what will it accomplish? Arguments, however finely spun, can never change the nature of things. Very true—so a truce with them.*

My L. talks of leaving the country—may a kind angel guide thy steps hither. Solitude at length grows tiresome. Thou sayst thou wilt quit the place with regret—I think so too. Does not something uneasy mingle with the very reflection of leaving it? It is like parting with an old friend whose temper and company one has long been acquainted with.

* Here follows a digression of no general interest, on the loss of a valuable friend.

I think I see you looking twenty times a-day at the house—almost counting every brick and pane of glass, and telling them at the same time, with a sigh, you are going to leave them. Oh! happy modification of matter, they will remain insensible of thy loss.

But how wilt thou be able to part with thy garden. The recollection of so many pleasing walks must have endeared it to you. The trees, the shrubs, the flowers which thou reared (*sic*) with thy own hands—will they not droop and fade away sooner upon thy departure? Who will be the successor to nurse them in thy absence? Thou wilt leave thy name upon the myrtle tree.—If trees and shrubs and flowers could compose an elegy, I should expect a very plaintive one upon the subject.

Adieu, adieu! Believe me ever, ever thine,
L. STERNE.

TO MRS STERNE.

Paris, June 17, 1762.

MY DEAREST,—Probably you will receive another with this by the same post—if so read this the last. It will be the last you can possibly receive at York, for I hope it will catch you just as you are upon the wing. If

that should happen I suppose in course you have executed the contents of it, in all things which relate to pecuniary matters; and when these are settled to your mind, you will have got through your last difficulty—everything else will be a step of pleasure, and by the time you have got half-a-dozen stages you will set up your pipes and sing *Te Deum* together, as you whisk it along.

Desire Mr C—— to send me a proper letter of attorney by you; he will receive it back by return of post. You have done everything well with regard to our Sutton and Hillington affairs and left things in the best channel. If I was not sure you must have long since got my picture, garnets, etc., I would write and scold Mr T—— abominably—he put them in Becket's hands to be forwarded by the stage coach to you, as soon as he got to town.

I long to hear from you and that all my letters and things are come safe to you, and then you will say that I have not been a bad lad—for you will find I have been writing continually as I wished you to do. Bring your silver coffee-pot, it will serve both to give water, lemonade and orjead (*sic*)—to say nothing of coffee and chocolate which, by-the-by, is both cheap and good at Toulouse like other things.

I had like to have forgot a most necessary

thing: there are no copper kettles to be had in France, and we shall find such a thing the most comfortable utensil in the house. Buy a good strong one, which will hold two quarts—a dish of tea will be a comfort to us on our journey south—I have a bronze teapot which we will carry also—as china cannot be brought over from England. We must make up a villainous party-coloured tea-equipage to regale ourselves and our English friends while we are at Toulouse.

I hope you have got your bill from Becket. There is a good-natured kind of a trader I have just heard of at Mr Foley's, who they think will be coming off from England to France with horses the latter end of June. He happened to come over with a lady, who is sister to Mr Foley's partner, and I have got her to write a letter to him in London this post, to beg he will seek you out at Mr E——'s, and in case a cartel ship* does not go off before he goes to take you under his care. He was infinitely friendly in the same office last year, to the lady who now writes to him, and nursed her on shipboard, and defended her by land with great goodwill.

Do not say I forget you, or whatever can be conducive to your ease of mind on this

* A ship employed in the exchange of prisoners, or in carrying any propositions to an enemy. Formerly written *chartel*.

journey. I wish I was with you, to do these offices myself, and to strew roses on your way—but I shall have time and occasion to show you I am not wanting.

Now, my dears, once more pluck up your spirits—trust in God—in me—and in yourselves. With this, was you put to it, you would encounter all these difficulties ten times. Write constantly, and tell me you triumph over all fears; tell me Lydia* is better, and a helpmate to you. You say she grows like me—let her show me she does so in her contempt of small dangers, and fighting against the apprehensions of them, which is better still.

As I will not have F's share of the books, you will inform him so. Give my love to Mr Fothergill and to those true friends which envy has spared me, and for the rest *laissez passer*. You will find I speak French tolerably,† but I only wish to be understood. You will soon speak better. A month's play with a French demoiselle will make Lyd chatter like a magpie. Mrs ——— understood not a word of it when she got here, and writes me word she begins to prate apace—you will do the same in a fortnight.

* Sterne's daughter.

† His 'Sentimental Journey' tells how he wrote it. In that book we meet with French,

'*after the scole of Stratford atte Bowe*'

in such forms as *papillotes*, *avance-courier*, *garçon de bonne fortune*, *Coté Rot*, *andouillets*, *Perquignay*, *St Dennis*, etc.

Dear Bess, I have a thousand wishes, but have a hope for every one of them. You shall chant the same JUBILATE, my dears, so God bless you. My duty to Lydia, which implies my love too. Adieu. Believe me, your affectionate

L. STERNE.

Memorandum.

Bring watch-chains, tea-kettle, knives, cookery-book, etc.

You will smile at the last article—so adieu!—at Dover, the Cross-Keys; at Calais, the Lyon d' Argent—the master a Turk in grain.

TO MISS CATHERINE DE FOURMANTEL.

London.

MY DEAR KITTY,—I should be most unhappy myself, and I know you would be so too, if I did not write to you this post, though I have not yet heard a word from you. Let me know, my sweet lass! how you go on without me, and be very particular in everything.

My lodging is every hour full of your great people of the first rank, who strive who shall most honour me: even all the Bishops have sent their compliments to me, and I set out on Monday morning to pay my visits to them all.* * *

* Information about Lord Chesterfield and Lord Rockingham, of little interest probably to 'dear Kitty' or anyone, except the writer.

I have snatched this single moment, though there is company in my rooms, to tell my dear dear Kitty this, and that I am hers for ever and ever—

LAU. STERNE.

TO MISS CATHERINE DE FOURMANTEL.

London, April 1st 1760.

MY DEAR KITTY,—I am truly sorry from your account in your letter to find you do not leave York till the 14th, because it shortens the time I hoped to have stole (*sic*) in your company when you come—* * *

These separations, my dear Kitty, however grievous to us both, must be, for the present. God will open a dore, (*sic*) when we shall some time be much more together, and enjoy our desires without fear or interruption.

I have fourteen engagements to dine now in my books, with the first nobility. I have scarce time to tell you how much I love you, my dear Kitty, and how much I pray to God that you may so live and so love me, as one day to share in my great good fortune.—My fortune will certainly be made, but more of this when we meet—Adieu—write, and believe your affectionate friend, L. S.

Compliments to Mama (*sic*).

* More about Lord Rockingham.

London, May 8th, 1760.

MY DEAR KITTY, —I have arrived here safe and sound except for the hole in my heart, which you have made, like a dear, enchanting slut as you are.* And now my dear, dear girl! let me assure you of the truest friendship for you, that ever man bore towards a woman. Where ever I am, my heart is warm towards you and ever shall be till it is cold for ever.

I thank you for the kind proof you gave me of your love and of your desire to make my heart easy, in ordering yourself to be denied to you know who:—whilst I ham (*sic*) so miserable to be separated from my dear dear Kitty, it would have stabbed my soul to have thought such a fellow could have the liberty of comeing (*sic*) near you. I therefore take this proof of your love and good principles most kindly, and have as much faith and dependence upon you in it as if I were at your elbow—would to God I was at it this moment! but I am sitting solitary and alone in my bed-chamber (ten o'clock at night after the play) and would give a guinea for a squeeze of your hand. I send my soul perpetually out to see what you are a-doing—wish I could send my body with it.

Adieu! dear and kind girl, and believe me ever your kind friend and most affectionate ad-

* Here he speaks of the kindness of Mr Garrick, and ten noblemen and men of fashion.

mirer. I go to the Oratorio this night. Adieu !
Adieu !

P.S.—My service to your Mama.

Direct to me in the Pall Mal (*sic*) at ye 2nd
House from St Alban's Street.

TO MISS FOURMANTEL,
AT MRS JOLIFFE'S, IN STONE GATE, YORK.

MY DEAR KITTY,—I was so content after drinking my tea with you this afternoon that I forgot I had been engaged all this week to visit a gentleman's family on this day. I think I mentioned it in the beginning of the week, but your dear company put that, with many other things, out of my head. I will, however, contrive to give my dear friend a call at four o'clock, though by-the-by I think it not quite prudent; but what has prudence, my dear girl, to do with love? In this I have no government, at least not half so much as I ought.

I hope my Kitty has had a good night. May all your days and nights be happy! Sometime it may and will be more in my power to make them so. Adieu!

If I am prevented calling at four, I will call at seven.

TO LADY P.

Mount Coffee House, Tuesday, 3 o'clock.

There is a strange mechanical effect produced in writing a billet-doux within a stone cast of the lady who engrosses the heart and soul of an *inamorato*. For this cause (but mostly because I am to dine in this neighbourhood) have I, Tristram Shandy, come forth from my lodgings to a coffee-house, the nearest I could find to my dear Lady ——'s house, and have called for a sheet of gilt paper to try the truth of this article of my creed—now for it—

O my dear Lady, what a dishclout of a soul hast thou made of me!—I think, by the by, this a little too familiar an introduction for so unfamiliar a situation as I stand in with you—where, heaven knows, I am kept at a distance and despair of getting an inch nearer you, with all the steps and windings I can think of to recommend myself to you. Would not any man in his senses run diametrically from you, and as far as his legs would carry him, rather than thus causelessly, foolishly and foolhardily, expose himself afresh and afresh, where his heart and his reason tell him he shall be sure to come off loser, if not totally undone.

Why would you tell me you would be glad to

see me? Does it give you pleasure to make me more unhappy, or does it add to your triumph, that your eyes and lips have turned a man into a fool, whom the rest of the town is courting as a wit?

I am a fool, the weakest, the most ductile, the most tender fool that ever woman tried the weakness of, and the most unsettled in my purposes and resolutions of recovering my right mind.

It is but an hour ago that I kneeled down and swore I never would come near you, and after saying my Lord's Prayer for the sake of the close, *of not being led into temptation*,* out I sallied like any Christian hero, ready to take the field against the world, the flesh and the devil; not doubting but I should finally trample them all down under my feet.

And now I am got so near you, within this vile stone's cast of your house, I feel myself drawn into a vortex, that has turned my brain upside downwards; and though I had purchased a box ticket to carry me to Miss ——'s benefit, yet I knew very well that was a single line directed to me to let me know Lady —— would be alone at seven, and suffer me to spend the

* 'A horrible baseness of blasphemy.' Thus, Thackeray.

evening with her, she would infallibly see everything verified I have told her.

I dine at Mr C——r's in Wigmore Street, in this neighbourhood, where I shall stay till seven, in hopes you purpose to put me to this proof. If I hear nothing by that time, I shall conclude you are better disposed of, and shall take a sorry hack and sorrowily jog on to the play. Curse on the word, I know nothing but sorrow, except the one thing that I love you (perhaps foolishly, but) most sincerely,

L. STERNE.

TO ELIZABETH DRAPER.

March (?), 1767.

Eliza* will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart. I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to yours. The others came from the head: I am more indifferent about their reception.

I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you; I ought to be wholly so, for I never valued (or saw more good qualities to value) or thought more of one of your sex than of you. So adieu. Yours faithfully, if not affectionately,

L. STERNE.

* Eliza and Elizabeth are used indifferently.

I cannot rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half-past twelve, till I know how you do.

May thy dear face smile as thou risest, like the sun of this morning.

I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday, and disappointed too at not being let in. Remember my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town (you'll say) say otherwise. No matter. Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven; when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and will be glad to see

THY BRAMIN.

Nine o'clock.

TO ELIZA.

I got thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's where I dined and where I was heard (as I talked of thee an hour without intermission) with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his eighty-fifth year says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair

Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other Nabobesses as much in wealth as she does already in exterior and (what is far better) in interior merit. I hope so too. . . .*

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction;—for there was only a third person and of sensibility with us, and a most sentimental afternoon till nine o'clock have we passed! But thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enliven'd the discourse—and when I talked not of thee still did'st thou fill my mind and warmed every thought I uttered, for I am not ashamed to acknowledge, I greatly miss thee.

Best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained the whole night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond the power of words. Assuredly does Heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us! . . . †

May every evil so vanish that thwarts Eliza's happiness or but awakens thy fears for a moment! Fear nothing my dear! Hope everything. . . . ‡

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing-desk, and wilt consult it in all doubts and difficulties—grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou dost;

* Matter connected with Lord Bathurst.

† Details of her sickness and recovery.

‡ Sentiments honourable to Sterne's heart, but not in the nature of love, as it is commonly understood.

his picture does not do justice to his own complacency.

Thy sweet little plan and distribution of thy time—how worthy of thee! Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest me nothing to direct thee in! Thou leavest me nothing to require—nothing to ask—but a continuation of that conduct which won my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May the roses come quick back to thy cheeks, and the rubies to thy lips! . . .

How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter? 'Tis most delicious to me for the very reasons you excuse it. Write to me, my child, only such. Let them speak the easy carelessness of a heart that opens itself anyhow and everyhow to a man you ought to esteem and trust.

Such, Eliza, I write to thee—and so I should ever live with thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if Providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe—for I am all that honour and affection can make me,

THY BRAMIN.

TO ELIZA.

I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner. 'Tis melancholy, indeed, my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sick-

ness! Thou art encountered with evils enow without that additional weight! I fear it will sink thy poor soul and body with it, past recovery. Heaven supply thee with fortitude!

We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues and endearing conduct all the afternoon. Mrs James and thy Bramin have mixed their tears a hundred times, in speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, and thy graces.

The ——'s by heavens, are worthless! I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name! . . . * Adieu to all such for ever! Mrs James's honest heart revolts against the idea of ever returning them one visit. I honour her and I honour thee, for almost every act of thy life, but this blind partiality for an unworthy being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me a right which arises only out of that fund of affection I have and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death! Reflect Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee? Think whether I can have any but what proceed from the cause I have mentioned! I think you are a very deserving woman, and that you want nothing but firmness and a better opinion of yourself, to be

* Observations to the discredit of the ——'s

the best female character I know. I wish I could inspire you with a share of that vanity your enemies lay to your charge (though to me it has never been visible), because I think in a well-turned mind, it will produce good effects.

I probably shall never see you more, yet I flatter myself you'll sometimes think of me with pleasure, because you must be convinced I love you, and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you than your want of reverence for yourself.

I had not power to keep this remonstrance in my breast. It's now out; so adieu. Heaven watch over me,* Eliza.—Thine,

YORICK.

TO ELIZA.

To whom should Eliza apply in her distress but to her friend who loves her? Why then, my dear, do you apologise for employing me? Yorick would be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another which he could execute. . . † May every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to my hopes!

I have bought you ten handsome brass screws to hang your necessaries upon. I purchased

* *Sic.* ? *my.*

† Information about her piano strings.

twelve but stole a couple from you to put up in my own cabin at Coxwold. I shall never hang nor take my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you. . . * Would I could, Eliza, so supply all thy wants and all thy wishes!—it would be a state of happiness to me. The journal is as it should be, all but its contents. Poor, dear, patient being! I do more than pity you, for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy—as I figure to myself your distresses.

Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of . . . : there was cause; and besides a good heart ought not to love a bad one; and indeed, cannot. But, adieu to the ungrateful subject.

As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell. May the God of kindness be kind to thee and approve himself thy protector now thou art defenceless! And for thy daily comfort bear in thy mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza! Whilst I live, count upon me as the most warm and disinterested of earthly friends.

YORICK.

* Information about other articles which he had purchased for her.

TO ELIZA.

MY DEAREST ELIZA,—I begun a new journal this morning : you shall see it ; for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy. 'Tis a sorrowful page ; but I will write cheerful ones ; and could I write letters to thee, they should be cheerful ones too ; but few, I fear, will reach thee ! However, depend upon receiving something of the kind by every post ; till then, thou wavest thy hand and bid'st me write no more.

Tell me how you are, and what sort of fortitude Heaven inspires you with. How are you accommodated, my dear ? Is all right ? Scribble away, anything and everything to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal, with the Jameses, should you be detained there by contrary minds.

Indeed, Eliza, I should with pleasure fly to you, could I be the means of rendering you any service or doing you kindness.

Gracious and merciful God ! consider the anguish of a poor girl !—strengthen and preserve her in all the shocks her frame must be exposed to ! She is now without a protector, but Thee ! Save her from all accidents of a dangerous element, and give her comfort at the last.

My prayer, Eliza, I hope, is heard ; for the sky seems to smile upon me, as I look up to it. I am just returned from my dear Mrs James's, where I have been talking of thee for three hours. She has got your picture, and likes it ; but Marriot and some other judges agree that mine is the better, and expressive of a sweeter character. But what is that to the original ? Yet I acknowledge that hers is a picture for the world, and mine is calculated only to please a very sincere friend or sentimental philosopher. In the one, you are dressed in smiles, and with all the advantages of silks, pearls, and ermine ; in the other, simple as a vestal—appearing the good girl Nature made you : which, to me, conveys an idea of more unaffected sweetness than Mrs Draper, habited for conquest in a birthday suit, with her countenance animated and her dimples visible.

If I remember right, Eliza, you endeavoured to collect every charm of your person into your face, with more than common care, the day you sat for Mrs James, your colour, too, brightened, and your eyes shone with more than usual brilliancy. I then requested you to come simple and unadorned when you sat for me ; knowing (as I see with unprejudiced eyes) that you would re-

ceive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish.

Let me now tell you a truth, which I believe I have uttered before. When I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and as a very plain woman. The mode of your dress (tho' fashionable) disfigured you. But nothing now would render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one. You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders, but are something more; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance; nor was there, nor ever will be, that man of sense, tenderness and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not, or will not be, your admirer, or friend, in consequence of it; that is, if you assume, or assumed, no character foreign to your own, but appeared the artless being, nature designed you for. A something in your eyes and voice you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read or heard of. But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence, that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with.

Were your husband in England, I would freely give him five hundred pounds, if money could purchase the acquisition, to let you only

sit by me two hours in a day, while I wrote my *Sentimental Journey*. I am sure the work would sell so much the better for it, that I should be re-imbursed the sum more than seven times told. I would not give ninepence for the picture of you the Newnhams have got executed; it is the resemblance of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes and the shape of your face (the latter the most perfect oval I ever saw), which are perfections that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly injured by the affected leer of the one and strange appearance of the other; owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's or your friend's false taste.

The ——s, who verify the character I once gave of teasing or sticking like pitch, or bird-lime, sent a card that they would meet in Mrs —— on Friday. She sent back she was engaged. . . .* She begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you will not write to them. It will give her and thy Bramin inexpressible pain. Be assured, all this is not without reason on her side. I have my reasons too; the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon.

* Observations to the discredit of the ——'s.

I said I never more would mention the name to thee; and had I not received it as a kind of charge from a dear woman that loves you, I should not have broken my word.

I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best and most endearing of girls! A peaceful night to thee. My spirit will be with thee through every watch of it.—Adieu.

TO ELIZA.

I think you could act no otherwise than you did with the young soldier. There was no shutting the door against him, either in politeness or humanity.

Thou tellest me he seems susceptible of tender impressions, and that before Miss Light* has sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her. Now I think it a thousand times more likely that he attaches himself to thee, Eliza, because thou art a thousand times more amiable.

Five months with Eliza, and in the same room, and an amorous son of Mars besides! '*It can no be, Masser.*'—The sun, if he could avoid it, would not shine upon a dunghill; but his rays are so pure, Eliza, and celestial, I never

* Miss Light, we are told, afterwards married George Stratton, Esq., late in the service of the East India Company at Madras.

heard that they were polluted by it.—Just such will thine be, dearest child, in this and every such situation you will be exposed to, till thou art fixed for life. But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour, the spirit of thy Yorick, and thy own spirit, which is equal to it, will be thy ablest counsellors. . . . * I fear the best of your ship-mates are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew, with which thou must behold them. So was—you know who!†—from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment when—but I will not mortify you. If they are decent and distant, it is enough; and as much as is to be expected. If any of them are more, I rejoice:—Thou wilt want every aid, and 'tis thy due to have them. Be cautious only, my dear, of intimacies. Good hearts are open, and fall naturally into them. Heaven inspire thine with fortitude in this and every deadly trial. Best of God's works, farewell! Love me, I beseech thee; and remember me for ever!

I am, my Eliza, and will ever be, in the most comprehensive sense,—Thy friend,

YORICK.

P.S.—Probably you will have an opportunity of writing to me by some Dutch or French ship,

* Observations against the policy of painting her cabin.

† A delicate allusion to Mr Draper.

or from the Cape de Verd Islands. It will reach me somehow.

TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA,—Oh, I grieve for your cabin—and the fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Nothing so pernicious as white lead. Take care of yourself, dear girl, and sleep not in it too soon—it will be enough to give you a stroke of an epilepsy.

I hope you will have left the ship, and that my letters may meet and greet you as you get out of your post-chaise at Deal. When you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order.* The first eight or nine are numbered; but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee, but thou wilt find them out by the day or hour which I hope I have generally prefixed to them.† When they are got together, in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee from time to time, and that thou wilt (when weary of fools and uninteresting discourse) retire and converse an hour with them and me.

I have not had power or the heart to aim at

* This solicitude was perhaps caused as much by a prospect of their publication as by any idea of their being a 'perpetual refuge' to Eliza.

† Both have been omitted by the original editor.

enlivening any one of them with a single stroke of wit or humour, but they contain something better; and what you will feel more suited to your situation—a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge.

I hope too you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart in every one of them; which speaks more than the most studied periods, and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon Yorick than all that laboured eloquence could supply.

Lean then thy whole weight, my Eliza, upon them and upon me. 'May poverty, distress, anguish and shame be my portion if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me!' With this asseveration made in the presence of a just God I pray to him that so it may speed with me as I deal candidly and honourably with thee!* I would not mislead thee Eliza, I would not injure thee in the opinion of a single individual for the richest crown the proudest monarch wears.

Remember that while I have life and power whatever is mine you may style and think yours. Though sorry should I be if ever my friendship was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy's

* Thus the foul Satyr, and the snivelling quack, the vain, wicked, false coward, the wretched, worn out old scamp, the mountebank, the paillassé as, with the sweet, engaging, frankness of literary brotherhood, he is called by Thackeray in his '*English Humourists*.'

sake. Money and counters are of equal use in my opinion ; they both serve to set up with.

I hope you will answer me this letter, but if thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one for thee, and knowing it is such a one as thou wouldst have written I will regard it as my Eliza's.

Honour and happiness, and health and comforts of every kind sail along with thee, thou most worthy of girls! I will live for thee and my Lydia—be rich for the dear children of my heart—gain wisdom, gain fame and happiness to share with them—with thee—and her in my old age. Once for all, adieu! Preserve thy life, steadily pursue the ends we proposed, and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given thee for thy well-being.

What can I add more in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last postman's bell, but recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Heaven with thee in the same fervent ejaculation, 'That we may be happy and meet again, if not in this world, in the next.' Adieu! I am thine, Eliza, affectionately and everlastingly,

YORICK.

TO ELIZA.

I wish to God, Eliza, it was possible to postpone the voyage to India for another year. . . . * You owe much, I allow, to your husband, you owe something to appearances, and the opinion of the world ; but, trust me, my dear, you owe much likewise to yourself. Return therefore, from Deal, if you continue ill. I will prescribe for you, gratis. You are not the first woman, by many, I have done so for, with success. I will send for my wife and daughter, and they shall carry you in pursuit of health, to Montpellier, the wells of Bançois, the Spa, or whither thou wilt. Thou shalt direct them, and make parties of pleasure in what corner of the world fancy points out to thee. We shall fish upon the banks of Arno, and lose ourselves in the sweet labyrinths of its vallies. And then thou should'st warble to us, as I have once or twice heard thee, —‘ I'm lost, I'm lost !’—but we should find thee again, my Eliza. Of a similar nature to this, was your physician's prescription : ‘ Use gentle exercise, the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples, with the society of friendly, gentle beings.’ Sensible man ! He certainly entered into your feelings. He knew the fallacy of

* Fancies she is ill, and desires her if so to delay her voyage, wishes that he might provide for her, if her husband fears expenses.

medicine to a creature, whose illness has arisen from the affliction of her mind. Time only, my dear, I fear you must trust to, and have your reliance on ; may it give you the health so enthusiastic a votary to the charming goddess deserves.

I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things, which, if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable, philosophic friend ! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my uncle Toby's widow. I don't mean to insinuate, hussey, that my opinion is no better founded than his was of Mrs Wadman ; nor do I conceive it possible for any Trim to convince me it is equally fallacious. I am sure while I have my reason it is not.—Talking of widows—pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy Nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long—she has sold all the provinces in France already—and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself. 'Tis true I am ninety-five in constitution and you but twenty-five—rather too great a disparity this ! But what I want in youth I will make up in wit and good humour. Not

Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love and sing thee my wife elect! All those names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza. Tell me, in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal, and that you would (like the *Spectator's* mistress) have more joy in putting on an old man's slippers, than associating with the gay, the voluptuous and the young.

Adieu, my Simplicia!—Yours.

TRISTRAM.

TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA.—I have been within the verge of the gates of death.* . . . I dreamt I was sitting under the canopy of Indolence, and that thou camest into the room with a shawl (*sic*) in thy hand, and told me my spirit had flown to thee in the Downs, with tidings of my fate, and that you were come to administer what consolation filial affection could bestow, and to receive my parting breath and blessing. With that you folded the shawl about my waist, and kneeling, supplicated my attention. I awoke; but in what a frame! Oh! my God! 'But thou wilt number my tears, and put them all into thy

* Details of sickness.

bottle.' Dear girl! I see thee. Thou art for ever present to my fancy,—embracing my feeble knees, and raising thy fine eyes to bid me be of comfort, and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears :—' Bless *me*, even also* my father!' Blessing attend thee, thou child of my heart! . . . †

Comfort thyself eternally with this persuasion, —' That the best of beings ' (as thou hast sweetly expressed it), ' could not, by a combination of accidents, produce such a chain of events, merely to be the source of misery to the leading person engaged in them.' The observation was very applicable, very good, and very elegantly expressed. I wish my memory did justice to the wording of it. Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza? You have absolutely exalted it to a science. When I am in want of ready cash, and ill-health will not permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters as finished essays 'by an unfortunate Indian lady.' The style is new, and would almost be a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit; but their sense, natural ease and spirit, is not to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the

* (?) Even *me* also.

† Details of his recovery from sickness.

globe ; nor, I will answer for it, by any of your country-women in yours. . . .*

I only wonder where thou couldst acquire thy graces, thy goodness, thy accomplishments—so connected, so educated ! Nature has surely studied to make thee her particular care ;—for thou art (and not in my eyes alone), the best and fairest of all her works.

And so this is the last letter thou art to receive from me ; because the *Earl of Chatham*,† (I read in the papers), is got to the Downs ; and the wind I find is fair. If so—blessed woman ! take my last, last farewell—cherish the remembrance of me ; think how I esteem, nay, how affectionately I love thee, and what a price I set upon thee ! Adieu, adieu ! and with my adieu, let me give thee one straight rule of conduct, that thou hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms—but I concenter it in one word,

REVERENCE THYSELF.

Adieu once more, Eliza ! May no anguish of heart plant a wrinkle upon thy face, till I behold it again ! May no doubt or misgiving disturb the serenity of thy mind, or awaken a painful

* Tells her he has shown her letters to several *literati*, who have admired them.

† By the newspapers of the time, it appears that the *Earl of Chatham*, *East Indiaman*, sailed from Deal, April 3, 1767.

thought about thy children, for they are Yorick's, and Yorick is thy friend for ever! Adieu, adieu, adieu!

P.S.—Remember that hope shortens all journeys, by sweetening them. So sing my little stanza on the subject, with the devotion of an hymn, every morning when thou arisest, and thou wilt eat thy breakfast with more comfort for it.—

Blessings, rest, and Hygeia go with thee! May'st thou soon return in peace and affluence to illumine my night! I am, and shall be, the last to deplore thy loss, and will be the first to congratulate and hail your return.

Fare thee well!

DAVID HUME

1776

LIKE many other philosophers and historians, David Hume was by no means insensible to the charms of the fair sex, who seem to have been equally fond of his society. When Lord Charlemont, who had made his acquaintance some sixteen years before at Turin, fell in with him at Paris, he found him in frequent attendance on ladies' toilettes; while at the opera, his broad, unmeaning face was usually to be seen between *deux jolis minois*. In an entertaining paper on the noted philosopher in the *Edinburgh Review* (1847), we find many interesting incidents related concerning him. It appears that in one of the pantomime tableaux, then in fashion, the part of Sultan was assigned to him, whose prevailing words were to win over to his love the reluctant captives. He was placed on a sofa, with the

two prettiest women in Paris beside him ; and there, he kept looking steadily in the face, thumping his knees and stomach, and repeating again and again : Eh bien ! Mes demoiselles. Eh bien ! Vous voilà donc ; eh bien ! Vous voilà, vous voilà ici ? This lasted for a quarter-of-an-hour—when he was turned over to officiate as spectator, but the women persisted in considering a supper incomplete without him. Whatever his personal defects, he was a wonderful favourite with the ladies, and indeed, when at Paris, the attentions bestowed on him might have been envied by the most handsome and captivating men of the period. Two of the houses of chief fame, kept open at this time for men of wit and learning by celebrated women, were the hostile houses of Madame du Deffands and Madame Geoffrin. But Hume's friendship with D'Alembert was in his way with the first, his devotion to Madame de Boufflers with the second. Of Madame de Boufflers' merits there can be no doubt, and equally certain is it that he had a sincere regard for her. Thus, before a year is over, we find him assuring her that among other obligations, which he owed her without number, 'she had saved him from a total indifference towards everything in human life.' But extracts from his letters will better describe his feelings,

and in a letter dated 14th July, 1764, he writes:— I shall venture to say, dear madam, that no letter, which even you have ever wrote, conveyed more satisfaction than did that which you favoured me. What pleasure to receive testimonies and assurances of good will from a person whom we highly value, and whose sentiments are of such importance to us. You could not possibly have done an action more charitable than to speak to me in so friendly a manner.

You have thereby supplied me for a long time with matter for the most agreeable musing; and I shall henceforth, I hope, bid defiance to all returns of diffidence and jealousy. I confess with shame, that I am but too subject to this sentiment, even in friendship. I never doubt of my friend's probity or honour, but often of his attachment to me, and sometimes, as I have afterwards found, without reason. If such was my disposition even in youth, you may judge that, having arrived at a time of life when I can less expect to please, I must be more subject to inroads of suspicion. Common sense requires that I should keep at a distance from all attachments that can imply passion. But it must be the height of folly to lay myself at the mercy of a person whose situation seems calculated to inspire doubt, and who, being so little at her own disposal, could

not be able, even if willing, to seek such remedies as might appease that tormenting sentiment.

Should I meet with one, in any future time, (for to be sure I know of none such at present) who was endowed with graces and charms beyond all expression, whose character and understanding were equally an object of esteem, as her person was of tenderness, I ought to fly her company, to avoid all connection with her, even such as might bear the name of friendship, and to endeavour to forget her as soon as possible. I know not if it would be prudent even to bid her adieu. Surely it would be highly imprudent to receive from her any testimonies of friendship and regard. But who, in that situation, could have resolution to reject them? Who would not drink up the poison with joy and satisfaction?

* * * *

You tell me, that, though you are still exposed to the attacks of melancholy, it is of the softer kind, and such as you would not desire to be rid of. I shall not, any further than you allow me, indulge my conjectures. You were offended at my former ones, and I wish they may be false. But it is impossible for my thoughts not to return often to a subject, in which I am so deeply interested. If there are any obstacles to

your happiness, I should wish they were of a nature that could be removed; and that they admitted of some other remedy than the one you sometimes mention, on which I cannot think without terror. I feel the reflection this instant as the stroke of a poniard at my heart, and the tear at present starts in my eye when it recurs to me. Is it necessary that my sympathy too should furnish you with arms against me?

From the next letter it would seem that some little misunderstanding had arisen, to rectify which Hume thus wrote:—

I could never yet accuse myself, dear madam, of hypocrisy or dissimulation; and I was surely guilty of these vices in the highest degree, if I wrote you a letter which carried with it any marks of indifference. What I said in particular I cannot entirely recollect, but I well remember in general what I felt, which was a great regard and attachment to you, not increased indeed (for that was scarce possible), but rendered more agreeable to myself, from the marks you had given me of your friendship and confidence. I adhere to these. I will never but with my life be persuaded to part the hold which you have been pleased to afford me. You may cut me to pieces,

limb by limb ; but like those pertinacious animals of my country, I shall expire still attached to you, and you will in vain attempt to get free.

For this reason, madam, I set at defiance all those menaces, which you obliquely throw out against me. Do you seriously think, that it is at present in your power to determine whether I shall be your friend or not ? In everything else your authority over me is without control. But with all your ingenuity, you will scarce contrive to use me so ill, that I shall not still better bear it ; and after all, you will find yourself obliged, from pity, or generosity, or friendship, to take me back into your service.

At least this will probably be the case, till you find one who loves you more sincerely and values you more highly ; which with all your merit, I fancy it will not be easy for you to do. I know, that I am here furnishing you with arms against myself, you may be tempted to tyrannise over me, in order to try how far I will practise my doctrine of passive obedience, but I hope also that you will hold this soliloquy to yourself :—

‘This poor fellow, I see is resolved never to leave me ; let me take compassion on him ; and endeavour to render our intercourse as agreeable to him and as little burdensome to myself as possible.’ If you fall, madam, into this way of

thinking, as you must at last, I ask no farther ; and all your menaces will vanish into smoke.

Good God ! how much have I fallen from the airs which I at first gave myself ? You may remember, that a little after our personal acquaintance, I told you, that you was obliged à *soutenir la gageure*, and could not in decency find fault with me, however I should think proper to behave myself. Now I throw myself at your feet, and give you nothing but marks of patience and long-suffering and submission. But I own, that matters are at present upon a more proper and more natural footing ; and long may they remain so.

Hume's absence from Madame de Boufflers seems to have caused him much uneasiness as the next letter testifies.

*Lisle Street, Leicester Fields,
April 3, 1766.*

It is impossible for me, dear madam, to express the difficulty which I have to bear your absence, and the continual want which I feel of your society. I had accustomed myself, of a long time, to think of you as a friend from whom I was never to be separated during any considerable time ; and I had flattered myself that we were

peculiarly fitted to pass our lives in intimacy and cordiality with each other. Age and a natural equality of temper were in danger of reducing my heart to too great indifference about everything, it was enlivened by the charms of your conversation, and the vivacity of your character. Your mind, more agitated both by unhappy circumstances in your situation and by your natural disposition, could repose itself in the more calm sympathy which you found with me.

But behold! three months are elapsed since I left you; and it is impossible for me to assign a time when I can hope to join you. I still return to my wish, that I had never left Paris, and that I had kept out of the reach of all other duties, except that which was so sweet, and agreeable, to fulfil, the cultivating your friendship and enjoying your society. Your obliging expressions revive this regret in the strongest degree; especially where you mention the wounds which, though skinned over, still fester at the bottom.

Oh! my dear friend, how I dread that it may still be long ere you reach a state of tranquillity, in a distress which so little admits of any remedy, and which the natural elevation of your character, instead of putting you above it, makes you feel with greater sensibility. I could only wish to administer the temporary consolation, which the

presence of a friend never fails to afford . . .
I kiss your hands with all the devotion possible.

Certain references occur in his correspondence to his desire to be with her, and in the following letter he even goes so far as to suggest that they should travel together and settle down finally in some quiet, retired spot.

*Lisle Street, Leicester Fields,
16th May 1766.*

Nothing could have given me more pleasure than your letter, though I never doubted of your friendship, every instance of it affords me new satisfaction, especially one which opens to me the prospect of passing more of my time in your company. I could not wish for a more happy situation, nor one more conformable to my inclination.

The objections appear to me at this distance very light in comparison of the advantages. But I reserve the forming a full judgment till our next meeting, which, I hope, will be after your return from Pougues. . . . I have a project of accompanying you to Lyons. Would to God it were possible for us to take our flight thence into Italy, and from thence, if you would, into Greece. A friend of mine who has been long settled in

Smyrna returns thither next spring, and urges me to take the journey along with him. What do you think of the project? The idea of it is not altogether extravagant. Might we not settle in some Greek island, and breathe the air of Homer, or Sappho, or Anacreon in tranquillity, and great opulence. And might we not carry thither our philosopher of Derby who will surely prefer that sunny situation to the mountains and clouds of this northern climate. Perhaps Madame de Bussy might consent to be of the party. I kiss your hands with great regard and attachment.

Various private affairs kept him from returning to Paris to see Madame de Boufflers, his extreme regret and disappointment at which he takes care to impress upon her. But he consoled himself with the sight of her hand-writing; even although occasionally her letters were written for the purpose of giving him wholesome reproof as we may judge from the subjoined letter.

12th Aug. 1766.

Nothing could more rejoice me than the sight of your hand-writing after such long silence. My pleasure was not diminished by the contents of your letter; for, though you reprove me with

some vehemence, it is at the same time in so friendly, and so reasonable, a manner that I kiss the rod which beats me, and give you as sincere thanks for your admonitions as ever I did for any of your civilities and services.

The remainder of the letter relates to general topics of no special interest here.

Towards the close of the same year he writes—

I have had one of your letters, dear madam, too long before me unanswered. I have been of late in a way of life somewhat unsettled. I came down to visit my friends here, and put some affairs in order; but find myself so entangled with friends and affairs, that I know not when I shall get rid of them. I agree heartily to what you say, when you wish you had not allowed me to depart from Paris, it was not so necessary as I imagined to depart from it; and notwithstanding my inclination, I find unexpected difficulties in returning. . . .

I have not heard anything, for a long time, that has given me more pleasure than what you write me, that you are perfectly satisfied with the character and conduct of your son. It is a

delicious sentiment, and will be a consolation to you through life.

Adieu, my dear friend ; my regrets for parting with you are as lively as they were at the first moment. Please to direct to me as before—to the care of Mr Coutts, banker, in the Strand, London.

Unfortunately the closing letters of the correspondence show that differences of opinion in certain matters, which it is unnecessary to enter into here, caused some slight friction between Hume and Madame de Boufflers. Thus, in one letter he says : ‘To think that I have incurred your displeasure is too grievous to be borne ; even though it should happen, as you say, that my absence from you were to be eternal. But I prognosticate better of my good fortune than to think so. . . .’

I beg it of you not to be too long in answering me.

But things seem to have grown worse than better, judging from the next extract which we quote.

London, 22nd May 1767.

MADAM,—I find you are desirous to hear no

more of me, which, I own, is one of the great surprises, and none of the least afflictions I have met with in the course of my life. However, I could not forbear writing to you, because I shall put it in your power to do an act of generosity, which, unless you be indeed totally changed, in every respect, must give you pleasure. . . .

Happily this estrangement did not last long, for in January 1772, Hume wrote as follows to Madame de Boufflers :—

I am truly ashamed, dear madam, of your having prevented me in breaking our long silence ; but you have prevented me only by a few days, for I was resolved to have writ to you on this commencement of the year, and to have renewed my professions of unfeigned and unutterable attachment to you. . . .

For my part, I have totally and finally retired from the world, with a resolution never more to appear on the scene in any shape. This purpose arose, not from discontent, but from safety. I have now no object but to

Sit down and think, and die in peace.

What other project can a man of my age entertain ?

. . . I hearken attentively to the hopes you give me of seeing you once more before I die. I think it becomes me to meet you at London, and although I have frequently declared that I should never more see that place, such an incident as your arrival there, would be sufficient to break all my resolutions.—I am, with the greatest truth and sincerity, ever yours,

DAVID HUME.

We now come to the last letter of David Hume, which he addressed to Madame de Boufflers, and which tells its own sad tale.

Edinburgh, 20th August, 1776.

Though I am certainly within a few weeks, dear madam, and perhaps within a few days of my own death, I could not forbear being struck with the death of the Prince of Corti, so great a loss in every particular.

Pray write me some particulars, but in such terms that you need not fear, in case of decease, into whose hands your letter may fall.

My distemper is a diarrhœa, or disorder in my bowels, which has been gradually undermining me these two years, but within these six months has been visibly hastening me to my end.

I see death approach gradually without any anxiety or regret—I salute you with great affection, and regard, for the last time.

DAVID HUME.



GARRICK.

DAVID GARRICK

1779

THE name of David Garrick is intimately associated for more than one reason with that of Peg Woffington. They were probably the hero and heroine of Charles Reade's celebrated story, bearing the lady's name. Much has been written about her. Horace Walpole tells us she was an 'impudent Irish-faced girl,' and somebody else says she was a 'bricklayer's orphan, and a pedlar of fruit and vegetables.' Whatever she was, she was a great actress, and the love of a great actor.

'The scandalous chronicles of that time,' says the author of Garrick's *Private Correspondence*, two vols., 1831, 'hint at a somewhat more than friendly intimacy between Garrick and this delightful woman.—It may be so.—Woffington decidedly preferred male society, and Hoadley

remembered to have read some of his dramatic trifles to Garrick at Woffington's breakfast table. The connection between them was probably stopped by Garrick's economy.—He complains of her making her 'tea as red as blood.' She ultimately turned religious. This has been invidiously put down to hypocrisy. It was more probably weakness.

One of her best pictures is by Hogarth, which, says Mr Percy Fitzgerald in his *Life of Garrick*, can be seen in the Garrick Club collection, and makes us think of Lamb's description.—'The Woffington (a true Hogarth) on a couch dallying and dangerous.'

SONG

SYLVIA *

If truth can fix thy wavering heart
 Let Damon urge his claim,
 He feels the passion void of art
 The pure, the constant flame.

Though sighing swains their torments tell,
 Their sensual love contemn !
 They only prize the beauteous shell,
 But slight the inward gem.

Possession cures the wounded heart,
 Destroys the transient fire ;
 But when the mind receives the dart,
 Enjoyment whets desire.

* Mrs Woffington was called Sylvia from her appearance in that character in the 'Recruiting Officer.'

By age your beauty will decay,
Your mind improves with years ;
As when the blossoms fade away
The ripening fruit appears.

May Heaven and Sylvia grant my suit,
And bless the future hour,
That Damon who can taste the fruit
May gather every flower.

Here is another song which is said in Garrick's Poetical Works, 1785, two vols., 8vo. to have been 'written in compliment to Mrs Woffington,' and was probably sent to her by her then ardent admirer.

Once more I'll tune the vocal shell
To hills and dales my passion tell,
A flame which time can never quell,
That burns for thee, my Peggy !

Yet *quittar* bards the lyre shall hit,
Or say what subject is more fit
Than to record the sparkling wit
And bloom of lovely Peggy.

The sun first rising in the morn
That paints the dew-bespangled thorn
Does not so much the day adorn
As does my lovely Peggy.

And when in Thetis' lap to rest
He streaks with gold the ruddy west,
She's not so beauteous as undrest
Appears my lovely Peggy.

LOVE LETTERS

When Zephyr on the vi'let blows,
 Or breathes upon the damask rose,
 He does not half the sweets disclose
 As does my lovely Peggy.

I stole a kiss the other day,
 And trust me, nought but truth I say,
 The fragrance of the blooming May
 Is not so sweet as Peggy.

Were she arrayed in rustic weed,
 With her the bleating flocks I'd feed,
 And pipe upon the oaten reed,
 To please my lovely Peggy.

With her a cottage would delight,
 All's happy when she's in my sight ;
 But when she's gone, it's endless night—
 All's dark without my Peggy.

While bees from flower to flower shall rove,
 And linnets warble thro' the grove,
 Or stately swans the rivers love,
 So long shall I love Peggy.

And when death with his pointed dart
 Shall strike the blow that rives my heart,
 My words shall be when I depart,
 'Adieu, my lovely Peggy.'

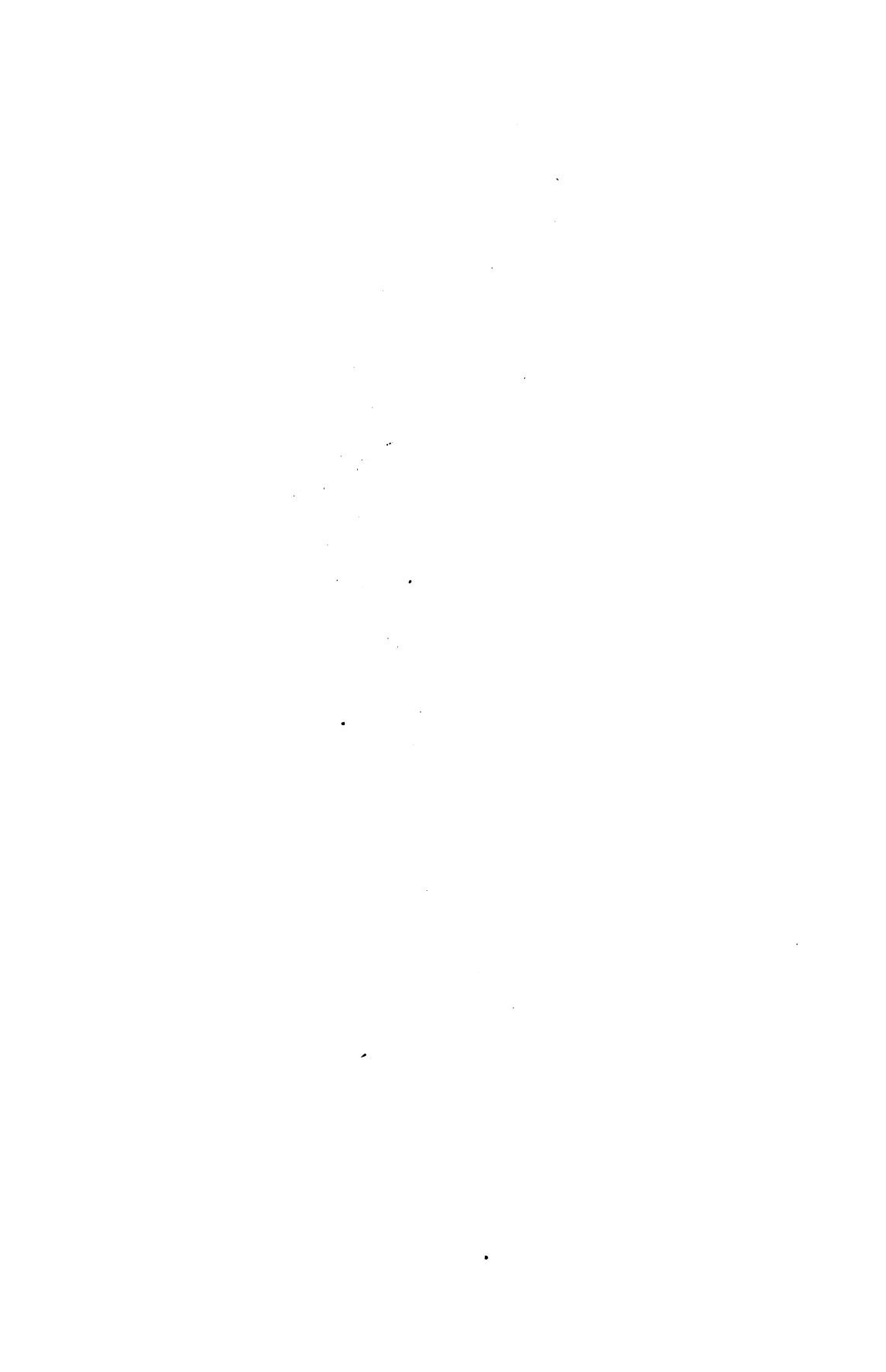
And once more we have :—

VERSES WRITTEN IN SYLVIA'S PRIOR.

Untouched by love, unmoved by wit,
 I found no charms in Matthew's lyre,
 But unconcerned read all he writ,
 Though love and Phœbus did inspire.



PEG WOFFINGTON.



Till Sylvia took her favourite's part,
Resolved to prove my judgment wrong ;
Her proofs prevailed, they reached my heart,
And soon I felt the poet's song.

Many such trifles were no doubt sent to Peggy, not by the ordinary post, but through the pages of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' where Johnson, it may be, secured their admission by Sylvanus Urban into the poet's corner. It has been asserted that Garrick went so far in this amour as to buy the wedding ring and try it on. Murphy is the authority for this. It is a matter of no great moment.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

1784

JOHNSON had, from his early youth, been sensible to the influence of female charms. As a school-boy, he fell in love with a quaker called Olivia Lloyd, to whom he wrote poetry of no great merit. A certain Miss Hickman 'playing on the spinet,' and a lady on 'receiving from her a sprig of myrtle' were also the causes of feeble amatory effusions in verse. His juvenile attachments to the fair sex were, however, transient, and Boswell is certain that he formed no criminal (whatever that may mean) connection. The celebrated 'Tetty,' a Mrs Porter, who eventually became his wife, was double Johnson's age. Poor dear 'Tetty' or 'Tetsey,' a provincial contraction or corruption of Elizabeth was, according to Garrick, very fat; but, says Macaulay, Johnson,

who was short-sighted, saw in her the graces of the Queensberrys and the Lepels. He asked his mother's consent, who knew too well the ardour of her son's temper to oppose his inclinations. 'Sir,' said the Lexicographer to an anxious enquirer, 'it was a love marriage on both sides.'

Among amatory incidents associated with his famous career, was his intimate friendship with Mrs Thrale, which has long since become almost historical. That, at the outset, Johnson's introduction into Mr Thrale's family,—which contributed so much to the happiness of his life—was owing to her desire for his conversation, is the general supposition; but it is not the case. The friendship seems to have originated through Mr Murphy, who, having spoken in the highest terms of Dr Johnson to Mr Thrale, was requested to introduce him. Accordingly, Dr Johnson accepted an invitation to dinner, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr and Mrs Thrale,—and they so delighted with his society,—that his invitations to their house became more and more frequent, till he eventually was regarded as one of the family. At last, too, an apartment was specially appropriated to him both in the house at Southwark and in their villa at Streatham. When this acquaintanceship commenced, Mrs Thrale was very pretty, and

about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, clever and witty. Nothing could have been more fortunate for Dr Johnson than this connection. He now had all the comforts and luxuries of life; his melancholy was averted, and everything was done to promote his happiness. Indeed, as Boswell writes, he was treated with the utmost respect, and even affection. The vivacity of Mrs Thrale's literary talk roused him to cheerfulness and exertion, even when they were alone. But this was not often the case; for he found here a constant succession of what gave him the highest enjoyment, the society of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way; who were assembled in numerous companies, called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be insensible.

Nor was this all, for Mrs Thrale, ever thoughtful and kindhearted, was always ready to pour out unlimited cups of tea; and to bear with a cheerful and amiable good-nature those outbursts of ill-temper in which Dr Johnson occasionally indulged. Such was the friendship which lasted long after Mr Thrale's death, and gossip has even whispered that this charming lady might have become his wife had she been willing to acknowledge the overtures made by him in this

direction. Anyhow, the subjoined letter affords sufficient clear indication of Dr Johnson's feelings for Mrs Thrale.

*Oct. 27, 1777.
Lichfield.*

DEAREST MADAM,—You talk of writing and writing, as if you had all the writing to yourself. If our correspondence were printed, I am sure posterity—for posterity is always the author's favourite—would say that I am a good writer too. To sit down so often with nothing to say, —to say something so often, almost without consciousness of saying, and without any remembrance of having said,—is a power of which I will not violate my modesty by boasting; but I do not believe everybody has it.

Some, when they write to their friends, are all affection, some, wise and sententious, some strain their powers for efforts of gaiety, some write news and some write secrets; but to make a letter without affection, without wisdom, without gaiety, without news, and without a secret, is, doubtless, the great epistolic art.

In a man's letters, you know, madam, his soul lies naked. His letters are only the mirror of his heart. Whatever passes within him is there shown undisguised in its natural progress; nothing is invented, nothing distorted; you see systems

in their elements, you discover actions in their motives.

Of this great truth, sounded by the knowing to the ignorant, and so echoed by the ignorant to the knowing, what evidence have you now before you? Is not my soul laid open before you in these veracious pages? Do you not see me reduced to my first principles? This is the pleasure of corresponding with a friend, where doubt and distrust have no place, and everything is said as it is thought. These are the letters by which souls are united, and by which minds naturally in unison move each as they are moved themselves. I know, dearest lady, that in the perusal of this—such is the consanguinity of our intellects—you will be touched as I am touched. I have indeed concealed nothing from you, nor do I ever expect to repent of having thus opened my heart.—I am, etc.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

But the death of Mr Thrale made, says Boswell, 'a very material alteration with respect to Johnson's reception in that family. The manly authority of the husband no longer curbed the lively exuberance of the lady, and as her vanity had been fully gratified by having the colossus of literature attached to her for many

years, she gradually became less assiduous to please him. Whether her attachment to him was already divided by another object, I am unable to ascertain, but it is plain that Johnson's penetration was alive to her neglect or forced attention, for on the 6th October this year, we find him making "a parting use of the library" at Streatham, and pronouncing a prayer which he composed on leaving Mr Thrale's family.'

The first letter in which we perceive a serious indication of coldness towards Mrs Thrale on Dr Johnson's part, is dated November 13, 1783, of which the following is an extract:—

Since you have written to me with the attention and tenderness of ancient times, your letters give me a great part of the pleasure which a life of solitude admits. You will never bestow any share of your good-will on one who deserves better. Those who have loved longest love best. A sudden blaze of affection may by a single blast of coldness be extinguished; but that fondness which length of time has connected with many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while be depressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those that have been much together, everything heard, and everything seen,

recalls some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some petty quarrel, or some slight endearment. Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week, but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an old friend never can be found, and nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost.

But an explanation in the altered friendship between Johnson and Mrs Thrale is no doubt to be found in the attractions which Gabriel Piozzi had for some time gained over the latter. He was a professional singer, and was introduced by Burney at Streatham, where he gave lessons to the young ladies, and occasionally sang for the company. He made considerable advances in Mrs Thrale's good graces, and in about two years she married him. As might be imagined the marriage was opposed on all sides, and especially by Johnson, who styled him a 'foreign fiddler,' which was no wonderment. The marriage, however, took place, and Mr Piozzi, in spite of all the contemptuous remarks hurled at him, made an excellent husband, and Mrs Thrale enjoyed twenty-five years of happy wedlock as Mrs





SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Piozzi, under which name she published all her literary works.

The following extract from a letter dated the 26th April (1782) is interesting, from the allusion to Mr Piozzi, and as showing indications of jealousy on the part of Johnson :—

I have been very much out of order since you sent me away ; but why should I tell you, who do not care, nor desire to know. I dined with Mr Paradise on Monday, with the Bishop of St Asaph (Shipley) yesterday, with the Bishop of Chester (Porteus) I dine to-day, and with the Academy on Saturday, with Mr Hoole on Monday and with Mr Garrick on Thursday, the 2nd of May, and then—what care you ? What then ?

Do not let Mr Piozzi, nor anybody else, put me quite out of your head ; and do not think that anyone will love you like your, etc.

The next letter was written by Mrs Thrale, informing Johnson that ‘ what she supposed he never believed ’ was true ; namely, that she was actually going to marry Signor Piozzi, an Italian music-master. Her letter was thus :—

Bath, June 30, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR.—The enclosed is a circular

letter, which I have sent to all the guardians ; but our friendship demands something more ; it requires that I should beg your pardon for concealment from you of a connexion which you must have heard of by many, but I suppose never believed.

Indeed, my dear sir, it was concealed only to save us both needless pain. I could not have borne to reject that counsel it would have killed me to take, and I only tell it you now because all is irrevocably settled, and out of all your power to prevent. I will say, however, that the dread of your disapprobation has given me some anxious moments, and though, perhaps, I am become by many privations the most independent woman in the world, I feel as if acting without a parent's consent, till you kindly write to your faithful servant,

H. L. P.

In Mrs Thrale's own publication of the correspondence, says Croker, this letter is given as from Mrs Piozzi, and is signed with the initials of her new name. Dr Johnson's answer as below, is also addressed to Mrs Piozzi, and both the letters allude to the matter as past—hers as 'settled,' his as 'done,' yet it appears by the periodical

publications of the day, that the marriage did not take place until the 25th July, and Madame D'Arblay dates it 'at the end of July.' Croker accounts for this by supposing that Mrs Piozzi, to avoid Johnson's importunities wished him to understand as done that which was only settled to be done.

London, July 8, 1784.

DEAR MADAM,—What you have done, however I may lament it, I have no pretence to resent, as it has not been injurious to me; I therefore breathe out one sigh more of tenderness, perhaps useless, but at least sincere.

I wish that God may grant you every blessing, that you may be happy in this world for its short continuance, and eternally happy in a better state; and whatever I can contribute to your happiness I am ever ready to repay, for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched. Do not think slightly of the advice which I now presume to offer. Prevail upon Mr Piozzi to settle in England, you may live here with more dignity than in Italy, and with more security. Your rank will be higher, and your fortune more under your own eye. I desire not to detail all my reasons, but every argument of prudence, and interest, is for England, and only

some phantoms of imagination seduce you to Italy.

I am afraid, however, that my counsel is vain ; yet I have eased my heart in giving it.

When Queen Mary took the resolution of sheltering herself in England, the Archbishop of St Andrews, attempting to dissuade her, attended on her journey ; and when they came to the irremeable stream that separated the two kingdoms, walked by her side into the water, in the middle of which he seized her bridle, and with earnestness proportioned to her danger and his own affection pressed her to return. The Queen went forward.

If the parallel reaches thus far, may it go no farther. The tears stand in my eyes.

I am going into Derbyshire and hope to be followed by your good wishes, for I am, with great affection, your, etc.

SAM. JOHNSON.

MRS PIOZZI

IN the year 1809, on the death of her husband, Mrs Piozzi retired to Bath and here fell in with a young actor of the name of William Augustus Conway, who, coming from Dublin, made his first appearance on the London boards in the year 1813. Apart from his handsome face and elegant figure, he does not seem to have possessed any histrionic talents, but his personal attractions produced an infatuation over Mrs Piozzi to which she quickly succumbed. In spite of the fact that she was now about seventy-three, it is evident that she was in love, and wished to be loved again by the object of her affection. The following letter written from Weston Super Mare, is dated Sept. 1, 1819 :

Three Sundays have now elapsed since James brought me dearest Mr Conway's promise to

write to me the very next—and were it not for the newspaper which came on Tuesday, the 24th August—sending me to rest comfortable, tho' sick enough, and under the influence of laudanum, I should relapse into my former state of agonizing apprehension on your account, but that little darling autograph round the paper was written so steady, and so completely in the old way,—whenever I look at it, my spirits revive, and Hope (true Pulse of Life) ceases to intermit, for a while at least,—and bids me be assured we soon shall meet again. I really was very ill three or four days; but the jury of matrons, who sat on my complaint, acquitted the apricots which I accused, and said they all, but two, proved *an alibi*.

Did I not once predict that dear Mr Conway would live to an extreme old age? Your Sibyl has always been right, and it was natural I should think so. The oak and cedar are said by naturalists to take the deepest root of all the trees; when these fancies cross your memory three-score years hence, do not forget the old friend of your young days, should you live to those of Methuselah; none more true, none more tender, none more disinterested will you ever find than H. L. Piozzi. Good night! and God bless my dearest and most valued

friend! for whose perfect recovery and long-continued happiness I will pray till the post comes in.—Yes; and till life goes out from poor H.L.P. I would keep up my spirits—as you wish me—and your spirits too. But how can I? Send a newspaper at least. Oh, for a breath of intelligence, however short, respecting health and engagements.

Another letter, dated Oct. 7, 1809, is written much in the same strain:—

I write—like my dearest friend—a brief communication; not to beg letters; the last half broke my heart, but to tell you that having directed mine to Mrs Rudd, I fear it will not be received safely. I wish my beloved friend to keep his spirits up, but have enough to do on his dear account—to keep up my own. Yet shall not the one alleviating drop of comfort, as you kindly call my letters,—ever fail.

Your being shut out by ill health from fortune and from fame is very affecting indeed. Suffer nothing that you are not obliged to suffer; however, we shall get through the dusky night and enjoy a bright morning after all. Your youth and strength are full in perfection, but 'tis on God's

favour I depend for your recovery. Here am I, however, praying most fervently for your restoration to all that makes life desirable, and giving God thanks for the power he lends me of affording solace to the finest soul, the fairest emanation of its celestial origin that ever was inclosed in human clay—such clay! But we must all be contented to bear our cross—the Paschal Lamb—type of our blessed Saviour, was ordered to be eaten with bitter herbs, and have I then been all the while complaining? Let us take things as God sends them, and be thankful—
Dear Hope,—

A cordial innocent as strong—
Man's heart at once inspirits—and serenes.

She sweetens pain and sorrows into joy, and sends me smiling through my tears to rest. Good-night—God send His angel to watch over you, and grant us yet a happy meeting by the 20th of October.

H. L. P.

That she was not unmindful of his bodily wants is evident from the following extract of a letter dated Dec. 29, 1819 :—

Accept, dearest Mr Conway, of a real





MRS. PIOZZI.

Christmas pye ; it will be such a nice thing for you when, coming late home, there is no time for a better supper ; but Berry begs you will not try to eat the crust ; it will keep for weeks this weather.

Then again, the next letter which explains itself—written at midnight on Feb. 2, 1820, ought to be considered pathetically touching :—

I would not hurry you for the world. . . .
Take your own time, and do it in your own way ; or rather suffer Nature to do it—that has done so much for you ; more, I do think, than for any mortal man. See what a scar the surgeon, however skilful, would have made in that beautiful neck, while Nature's preparation, thro' previous agony, made suppurating ease come on unfelt ; and the wound heals almost without a cicatrix—does it not??? So will it be with the mind. My own hasty folly—and my '*violent love outran the Pauser Reason.*'

Morning, Feb. 3.—I have had some sleep, and am now on my knees giving thanks to God for the power he has lent to you, to resolve against sinful dissipation. Oh spare the soul

which He thus designs to preserve ; oh keep that person pure which His good spirit will one day inhabit—throwing a Radiance round. Accept my best acknowledgments for having promised me so sweetly that you would try to rise superior to all low desires. . . .

Do not stir out ; do not tempt Heaven, or Heaven's king, who by your abscess has saved your precious life, so prayed for by poor

H. L. P.

With one further extract we must close these remarkable and certainly unique letters.

Feb. 3, 1820.

'Tis not a year and quarter since dear Conway, accepting of my portrait sent to Birmingham, said to the bringer—'Oh if *your lady* but retains her friendship ; oh if I can but keep *her* patronage—I care not for the rest.' . . . And now, when that friendship follows you through sickness and through sorrow, now that her patronage is daily rising in importance—upon a lock of hair given . . . or refused by une petite traitresse—haugs all the happiness of my once high-spirited and high-blooded friend. Let it not be so. Exalt Thy Love-Dejected Heart, and rise superior to such narrow minds. Do not however

fancy she will be ever punished in the way you mention; no, no. She'll wither on the thorny stem, dropping the faded and ungathered leaves—a China rose, of no good scent or flavour—false in apparent sweetness, deceitful when depended on. Unlike the flower produced in colder climates, which is sought for in old age, preserved even after death, a lasting and an elegant perfume—a medicine, too, for those whose shattered nerves require astringent remedies.

Let me request of you . . . to love yourself, . . . and to reflect on the necessity of not dwelling on any particular subject too long or too intensely. . . .

This is preaching, but remember how the sermon is written at three, four, and five o'clock by an octogenarian pen, a heart twenty-six years old, and as H. L. P. feels it to be all your own.

How deeply Mrs Piozzi loved the young actor is evident from the correspondence we have quoted. A curious instance, it has been remarked, of the Sibyl of fourscore being inspired with the feelings of a Sappho of twenty-six.

'Twas thee deprived my soul of rest,
And raised such tumults in my breast;
For while I gazed, in transport lost,
My health was gone, my voice was lost.

HENRY FREDERICK, DUKE OF
CUMBERLAND

1790

THIS prince, says Lord Mahon in his History of England, was noted only for his libertine amours. He attached himself to a young and beautiful woman, Henrietta Vernon, Lady Grosvenor, whose husband it must be owned afforded her no slight grounds of alienation. This lady he secretly followed into Cheshire, meeting her in disguise, yet not unobserved, at various times and places.

On the discovery which ensued, Lord Grosvenor, though from his own conduct hopeless of divorce, brought an action for criminal conversation, at which, for the first time, a Prince of the Blood appeared in the situation of defendant. Besides other evidence his own letters were produced, showing him to be no less faulty in his

grammar than in his words. The verdict of a British jury, in whose charge is female chastity, the sanctity of marriage, and the general custody of morals was of course against him, and damages were awarded to the amount of £10,000.

Immediately afterwards the Duke, deserting his victim, says Mahon, openly engaged in a new intrigue with the wife of a wealthy timber merchant. Here, at least, there was no dread of a second trial, since, as Horace Walpole * tells us, it seemed uncertain which was most proud of the distinction, the husband or the wife. But H.R.H. once more proving inconstant, next became enamoured of Mrs Horton, the daughter of an Irish peer and the widow of a gentleman in Derbyshire. This lady required marriage, to which H.R.H. agreed, and in October 1771, carrying off his prize to Calais, he there espoused her according to the rites of the Church of England. The King forbade them both his Court.

TO LADY GROSVENOR.

MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,—How sorry I am that I am deprived the pleasure of seeing this evening but especially as you are in pain God

* Memoirs, vol. iv. p. 356.

grant it over upon my knees I beg it altho' it may go of for a few days it must return and then you will be easy my only Joy will be happy, how shall I thank for your very kind note your tender manner of expressing yourself calling me your dear friend and at this time that you should recollect me.*

I wish I dare lye all the while by your bed and nurse you—for you will have nobody near you that loves you as I do thou dearest Angel of my Soul o' that I could but bear your pain for you I should be happy what grieves me most that they who *ought to feel* don't know inestimable Prize the Treasure they have in you—thank God if it should happen now Mr Croper is out of town and you may be quiet for a few days—I shall go out of town to-night but shall stay just for an answer pray if you can just write me word how you find yourself, I shall be in Town by eight To-morrow Evening in hopes of hearing again

I am sure my angel is not in greater pain than what my heart feels for my adorable angel—I sent this by D——† servant she is gone to Renelagh so if you write direct it to her the Boy has my orders and will bring it to me—Adieu

* The incoherency of his letters prove the reality of his love.

† Countess of Dunhoff.

God bless you and I hope before morning your dear little one.

Directed to Lady Grosvenor.

TO LADY GROSVENOR.

MY DEAR LITTLE ANGEL,—I am this instant going out of Town ten thousand thanks for your kind note I am sure nothing could make my aking heart to night bearable to me than when you say you are sensible how much I love you pray God it may be over before morning or that you may be better I shall be in Town at eight o'clock for I shall long to know how you are don't mention to D that I wrote by her servant to you for I have ordered him not to tell—

Adieu Good night God bless the Angel of my Soul Joy and Happiness without whom I have no comfort and with whom all happiness alive au revoir I hope very soon.

Directed to Lady Grosvenor.

TO LADY GROSVENOR.

MY DEAR LITTLE ANGEL,—I wrote my last letter to you yesterday at eleven o'clock just when we sailed I dined at two o'clock and as for the afternoon I had some music I have my own servant a-board that plays . . . and so got

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to bed about 10—I then prayed for you *my dearest love kissed your dearest little hair* and laye down and dreamt of you had you on the dear little *couch* ten thousand times in my arms kissing you and telling you how much I loved and adored you and you seem pleased but alas when I woke it found it all dillusion *nobody by me but myself at sea.* . . . I am sure the account of this days duty can be no pleasure to you my love yet it is exactly what I have done and as I promised you always to let you know my motions and thoughts I have now performed my promise this day to you and always will untill the very last letter you shall have from me. .*

When I shall return to you that instant O' my love mad and happy beyond myself to tell you how I love you and have thought of you ever since I have been separated from you. . . I hope you are well I am sure I need not tell you I have had nothing in my thoughts but your dearself and long for the time to come back again to you I will all the while take care of myself because you desire *my dear little Friend* does the angel of my heart pray do you take care of your dearself for the sake of your faithful servant who lives but to love you to adore you, and to bless the moment that has made you generous

* Uninteresting details.

enough to own it to him I hope my dear nay I will dare to say you never will have reason to repent it. . . .

Indeed my dear angel I need not tell you I know you read the reason too well that made me do so it was to write to you for God knows I wrote to no one else nor shall I at any other but to the King God bless you most amiable and dearest little creature living—

Aimons toujours mon adorable petite amour je
Vous adore plus que la vie mesme

I have been reading for about an hour this morning in Prior and find these few lines just now applicable to us—

How oft had *Henry** changed his sly disguise,
Unmarked by all but beauteous Harriet's eyes :
Oft had found means alone to see the dame,
And at the feet to breathe his am'rous flame :
And oft the pain of absence to remove
By letters soft interpreters of love
Till time and industry (the mighty two
That bring our wishes nearer to our view)
Made him perceive that the inclining fair
Received his vows with no reluctant ear ;
That *Venus* had confirmed her equal reign
And dealt to Harriet's heart a share of *Henry's* pain.

Such is my amusement to read those sorts of things that puts me in mind of our mutual

* The Duke's own name, therefore italicised.

feelings and situations now. God bless you till I shall again have an opportunity of sending to you, I shall write to you a letter a day as many days as you miss herein of me when I do they shall all come Friday 16th June God bless I shant forget you God knows you have told me so before I have your heart and it lies warm at my breast I hope mine feels as easy to you thou joy of my life adieu

Directed to Lady Grosvenor.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF
CUMBERLAND

Sunday the 18th

MY DEAREST FRIEND,— . . . he appears rather in better temper to-day so I am in great hopes he did not get enough of the letter to make out much he stayed out very late last night which seems to have occasioned a *weezing* to-day, by the means of my sisters I think I can send* and receive my letters very safe for the future

Carry is out of town for a few days so in the meantime I send them by another sister who comes to see me every day and she thinks it some business I have with Reda† about some Millenary that I dont chuse he should know of so if she gets

* Caroline Vernon, a maid of honour at St James.

† Mrs Reda, a milliner, living opposite St Albans Street, Pall Mall.

ever a letter for me she knows she is not to take it out of her pocket till we are alone so its all cleverly settled again at present, how miserable I should have been if we could not have contrived to hear from one another, I just live only upon the thoughts of its not being a great while before I have the happiness of a letter from you, I'm very sure you'll write as soon as you can, I know your tenderness for me well enough to be certain of that,—

he is coming upstairs I find so I shall conclude till to-morrow, God bless you my Dear Dear Friend.

Monday the 19th

I resume my Pen to tell you to day how sincerely I esteem you, he is still rather more come about again to-day, yesterday he shook hands with me, and this morning he came and kissed me . . he may take what measures he pleases with me if you will but love me, I'd a note from Mrs Reda this evening she sais she is certain he dares not say a word to her but she wishes he would above all things for that she knows very well how to answer him for that she knows enough of his Intrigues for him to be afraid of saying anything to her, and she is sure he is not *assez Hardi* to say a word to her upon the subject; . . I

think I've laid a good scheme. for I've already complained I've got a pain in my side & I intend to say its much worse at the end of the month & that I can't bear the motion of a carriage it will I really believe be a very good plan. for if I had said I had a Fever or anything of that kind, a physician wd know by my Pulse I had not and might discover me to him & besides this will be a more lasting complaint so at the end of Five or Six Weeks I'll grow very ill and send for Fordyce the apothecary and make him send me a quantity of nasty draughts which I'll throw out of the Window only think how wicked I am for in reality I'm already as strong and as well as ever I was in my Life . . . so I'll take it at the longest and not be well at the end of it, that we maint lye together & he must be going to Newmarket the 8th or 9th for the Races which are the Tenth & he'll stay there some days and when he comes home he shall find me worse with the pain in my side, and your six weeks will be out the 26th and I hope you'll not be long after that I'm quite in sperrits with the thoughts that by some means or other we shall make out the time that I shall be so happy as to see you when you return, my Dear Soul dieu till tomorrow when I shall add more continue to love me pray

Tuesday Evening the 20th.

I'm going to teize my Dear little Friend with more of my stupid letter I've not seen Mr Croper since yesterday Morning he did not come home from his Brothers till I was assleep last night . . . I cannot think what the Duce he is about,—I suppose by his not coming up to see me Mr Gro—r has cunsur'd out part of the Letter . . .

O my dearest Soul I've just received Two the dearest letters in the World from you, how can I, I cannot express my feelings of gratitude & Love for you, your dear heart is so safe with *me* and feels every motion mine does, with you, how happy your dearest letters make me I'm so much obliged to you for saying you will take care of your dear Health because I desire you, do my dearest Friend I intreat you, & I'll do the same, how sweet those verses are you sent me they are heavenly sweet because they were marked by you I always liked Prior but shall adore him because you like him. I'm made quite happy to night by having fresh assurances of yr love, you have mine intirely how happy will that day be to me that brings you back I wonder where I shall see you first I form a thousand happy ideas to myself I shall be unable to speak from Joy, in the mean time let us write as often as possible.

How kind it was of you to say you had

letters of consequence to write when it was only to *poor* me. Your dear little heart is hurried too on reading ye dear letters it has both laugh and cry'd with Joy, it lies warm on my breast I cherish it and think of nothing else but to preserve it safe there and happy.

My dearest Soul I send you Ten Thousand kisses I wish I could give them—

God bless you I will now conclude for I'm sure this letter is stupid enough to tire you to death pray forgive it I'm finishing it in the dark, I see nobody to tell me anything to make my letter entertaining, so can only tell you how sincerely I do and ever shall love you, & I know you'll like that as well as anything for nothing makes me so happy as your telling me so & we love too well not to live by sympathy

Amons tout Jour Tendrement mon adorable ammi mon tres chere ame

I'll write again everyday and send it to Reda at all opportunities God bless you *my dearest Dear life I shall ever love you*

This letter was inclosed in a cover directed to his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland.

TO LADY GROSVENOR

Portland Road Saturday 17th June

MY EVER DEAREST LITTLE ANGEL,— . . . thou loveliest dearest Soul I have been reading since my last Note of Yesterday to you a great deal out of Prior keeping the *Heroine* bye till I have read quite thro' and find many things in it to correspond with us exactly

Hear solemn Jove ; and conscious Venus hear ;
And thou bright maid, believe me, while I swear
No Time no Change no Future Flame shall move
The well plac'd Basis of my lasting love.

Do not think I wanted this Book with me to tell me how well I loved you, you know the very Feelings of My heart yet it is great pleasure when I am reading to find such passages that coincide so much with my own ideas of *dear* you, I will write constantly it is my only entertainment that and hearing from you will be except my Duty on board the only thought or employment I shall have or even wish. I have just now had a message from shore it is about 2 miles from Weymouth to go to the rooms this Morning. I have excused myself being much quieter on board and happier in writing to you. You are not there or else the Boat that should carry me would go too slow I long for that happy moment

that brings me back again to all I love and to all that I adore—indeed I am sorry my letters are so stupid, pray write to me you know whether to send them to send them* to D—— or to Mrs Reda.

I long to hear from you it is now within two days of a fortnight indeed it seems 40 thousand years, how happy when we meet that our letters has opened to each other the very feelings of our honest hearts permit me to *name* yours with mine then they will be words and happy looks from two of the most sincere Friends alive Your heart is well although fluttered while I write to you I hope mine is flurried too they ought to have the same emotions I know they have they are above dissembling I must now conclude God bless you I send you ten thousand kisses pray when you receive this return them to me for I want them sadly—

Addieu je vous aime adorable petite Creature je vous adore ma chere petite bijoux l'amant de mon cœur—

God bless I will write constantly.

Directed to Lady Grosvenor.

* These three words apparently a careless repetition.

H—— TO THE D—— OF C——

Friday Night

MY DEAREST SOUL,—How happy you made me by your letter it seems ages to me since I heard from you tho' in reality not many days, but minutes count for years with those that love, but I don't like to hear that you have still a little cough you don't take care of yourself I wish I could take care of you indeed. . . Mr G—— is just gone out for an hour, so I take this favourable time to write to you and shall send it off soon in the morning, I long most heartily for the time I shall see you again your letter came perfectly safe I was so happy to get it, I hope you will have received my last safe where I sent you the Acct. of Hollywell, only think of your having lost to Tarpolley I should have been so miserable if I'd known it at the time I'm so sorry, how dreadful at that time of night its a horrible intricket road, I'd a very odd discourse with Mr G—— to day about my Lord he first begun by saying he was very uneasy about his health and did not think he was so well as he used to be and he ought to take great care, he after that said he thought he gave up his whole time attention & fortune to horses and was worse and worse infatuated than ever about them & that he never could talk upon any

other subject therefore he could never have any discourse with him and that he would lose all his acquaintance but Jockeys, I could not help laughing at his description of him which was very just for sais he he will set for half an hour with his eyes fixed on a Table or a Chair and then apply to Tomm or anybody that is by, do you know what Mare such a Filly was got out of, or can you tell what Horse such a Colt was got out of by Gd I've got the best stud in England nobody will have any horses to run but me very soon, then if he or anybody that dont understand that subject offers to mention anything else he is as cross as anything for half an hour, and then fast asleep, so says Mr G—— . . . this was as you may imagine a Tete a Tete subject but its so exact a picture of him I was resolved you should have it— . . . * . . in bed before eleven when I always dream of you my Dearest Friend—I hope soon to have a letter from Carry with some writing from you in milk . . . † how I long for the 1st and 2nd of Deer yet it is being too selfish for what a situation for you but I'll say no more of that as you are so kind to say you dont mind it, today is my Birth day I think it has turned out quite lucky to me as I've such an opportunity of writing to you.

* Describes how she passes her time.

† Further ill account of my Lord.

Mr Gro——r is come home which obliges me to shorten it vexes me tho' I've nothing but nonsense to talk off—I dont like to be interrupted & prevented & I must write to Carry a line as I inclose this to her, I see Alnacks begins the 1st Decr do take a Dance there, and tell me how it looks it will make but two days difference & I cant bear to prevent you from everything O' dear I am always teasing you I think I'm quite provoked at myself, I wish to God I was the only one to suffer in an uncomfortable situation and I'd bear everything with pleasure but the thoughts of my dearest Friend being unhappy is ten times more to me than anything I could ever suffer, indeed my dearest life it is believe me that is my greatest anxiety and concern, I can never make you amends but my sincerest love you shall ever have from the bottom of my soul that you are kind enough to say you value and as long as you esteem it and give me yours it will be our mutual comfort, God bless you my dearest soul—I'm glad the time is fixed for the Parliament meeting which I hope will bring up to Town

Farewell a thousand times most sincerely till we meet My Dearest Soul ever most faithfully and affectionately Yrs

H——*

* Harriet, Lady Grosvenor.

Dearest Soul adieu au revoir I'll write from Mrs H—— & tell you when we return here.

The above letter was inclosed in a cover Directed to the D—— of C——.

H—— TO THE D—— OF C——
TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE D—— OF C——

Monday night

MY DEAREST SOUL,—I hope you are well I've come up stairs for bed, so steal this safe moment to write to you a line to tell you of something that has happened, and tho' I hate to say any thing to you that may be disagreeable still I'm always determined never to conceal any thing from you, as you can then act as you think will be best my Maid tells me there has been some of our servants telling her that its all about here that you have been here & she has really told me every particular that you came down with us and that we met here in the Fields and Lanes and the day you went away, and that you was at Chester, at Halkin and they knew you there, that you used to leave your horses at Eccleston the little Alehouse, that you had a gentleman with you & a servant, I denyed it & said I wd acquaint my Lord and make everybody prove

what they had said, upon which she turned pale, looked vastly frightened, and said it was from one person she had heard it & beg'd it might not be mentioned unless she heard more this makes me hope she made the most of it but yet I fear it has been much talked of by her naming so many particular facts, don't be alarmed my dear friend, but act as you think proper in regard to your coming down the worst come to the worst, thank God my Lord has told Mr Gros—r before me, we should all be in town in about —— month. Nothing could make me so unhappy as not to see you, but at the same time we had better not do anything imprudent, and we might possibly not be able to meet but very seldom, which when you had taken so much trouble in coming would give me if possible more concern than for you not to come, but consider it well over, my Dearest Friend, if we can meet with safety, nothing could give me so much but our feelings, and our danger in this is mutual, for our meeting imprudently might endanger our not meeting so often at another time, but could it be done safely it would be a pity to lose any of our (too few) opportunities.— I was very much frightened at first, but by thinking it over am not quite so alarmed, and hope it is not so much talked off as she said.—she said that at first they said there was Highwaymen in

the roads about, and that afterwards a person from Chester knew you and discovered it to everybody. I hope they won't dare to say anything to my lord, as he has not said a word, or even named you, and he has been at Halkin. Mrs Gros—r leaves us to-morrow, and on Wednesday we to go to Mrs H—— where I hope to receive your Dear Letter—I'm miserable in having any thing to tell you that can give you the least uneasiness it vexes me more than anything I feel myself, what do you think about it, Pray my dear Soul do either way you think best and I hope as we have been tollerably fortunate hitherto, we may scramble thro it somehow or other, but I dont know what to say what to advise but I'm sure you can judge much better than me pray let me have a few lines in Lemon Duce by C—— to tell me, I wish I could find a Meethod for you to write in ink, I'll consider about it night and day but I fear I can't but realy I make out the Lemon Duce very well, we leave Mrs H again on Friday, dont my dear Soul be alarmed about the Affair, if you think it better not to come we shall meet I hope not 3 weeks later thank God for that he seems horridly tired of being here & impatient to be in town he sais he'd not be from London when the parliament met for the world & I hope will be there some

days before, he is not yet well so any how thank God we shant be very long asunder, tho' indeed while I say so, a day nay an hour appears Ten thousand years, but my Soul if you think you can come safely we'll settle everything the best thats possible and we may perhaps do very well —O I dont know what to say, I say and unsay every minute—I long to see you and yet I would not do anything that might be against our future meeting, in short I'll say no more for I scarcely know what I say my Dearest Soul think it over and I'm vastly in hopes every thing will be for the best & will happen well and fortunate at last, I am racked between to se my Dear Friend and fear of being found out but dont my life be uneasy, think it over and either way you determine will I dare say end well, I'v told Carry you will write a Line to me by her in Lemon Duce,—how happy it is we come to town so soon let us think of that—this Letter is to set at 6 in the morning by the post as I must send it down as soon as I can that my sitting up may not be particular & cause my letter being suspected so I wont say much more but that I love you and always shall my Dear Dear Friend pray dont be vext about this affair ask Trusty* what he thinks of it God bless you my Dearest Dear Soul Ever with the most sincere affection yrs

H—

* Getting, a servant of The Duke's.

We have gone on just as usual but today he had a heap of men to dine here Sir W. Williams stays all night Mr G——r goes off in the morning, Farewell once more my Dearest Friend dont pray be uneasy I entreat you my Soul

Je vous etimerois etternelement tres cherre est adorable amme

What Joy will it be to me when I can see my Dear Soul

BON SOIR.

—— TO THE D—— OF C——

Tuesday Evening 5th

MY DEAREST SOUL,—Most sincerely unhappy I've felt ever since we parted both in having lost your dear Company which is so great a happiness to me and in the thought of the cold dreadful journey you have had indeed Iv'e have been miserable about you, I'm afraid you are scarcely arrived yet, I've not heard any news at all about you, but I've been very low spirited ever since tho I've hid it as much as in my power, I don't know to express my gratitude to you for the constant proofs you give me of the sincerity of your affection. I'm sure all the trouble you have taken only just to see me thoroughly convinces

me of it you say all the return you desire is my affection and Friendship indeed you have them most sincerely my heart is always with you indeed it is my dearest Friend — they came home Sunday to dinner he was here a little before the rest he came on horseback as he rode part of the way I grew in a fright least as he rode he might have come to shorten the way through the fields & met you, but hope as he did not arrive till nearish 3 that you was got to where you dined first, today they are gone to Chester to dinner, and tomorrow I beleive they set out for Wales again for 2 days I wish we had known it beforehand & may be we might have contrived to have made some use of it, but perhaps it may in the end be better as it is, I hope I shall have the happiness of hearing from you & if he is in Wales I shall endeavour to catch my letter before he comes—I hope C wont make any objections to receiving & sending the letters by the means you propose of sending Trusty to her, if she does pray let me know & I'll be sure to find a method of writing to you & I'll tear my brains to pieces but I'll find some way of hearing once or twice from you while we are here I thank God I dont beleive it will be long for he has been talking to-day of setting out & sais he believes he shall go before he at first thought of which was against the

meeting of Parliament I am in vast hopes he will fix the day soon & I will immediately write you word when I know, as soon as I hear from you and C—— and find if I may write again by her I will take the first moment anyhow if I dont hear to the contrary from C—— I'll write the beginning of next Week that if you send on Thursday sevenight it will be at C——ys I shall be sure to find some opportunity as I dare say he will not be long together at home—while I feel it so cold I'm in pain and misery for you good God in those post Chaises how starving it must be I'm so in fear it should hurt your breast, do take care of yourself pray my Dear Dear Friend and if you aint quite well pray take some advise dont take it ill my plaguing you so but realy I love you so much I can't help wishing you to take more care of your health.

he seems in a tolerable humour not much one way nor other but still drinks toast & water and very little wine he had a little weazing last night. I suppose dining out to-day wont do him much good he sais as the weather is so cold he could get off his business in Wales, but I really beleive he is very glad of any excuse to carry him there as he didnt seem to know what to do with himself at home

I do beleive and hope there is no suspicions

about you, and indeed tho painful I'm sure to both of us I really beleive it was the most prudent thing possible to go before people talked or began to suspect—nothing here has happened worth relating . . . *

the best thing we can possibly do now is to make him beleive it is all over between us and we have really I beleive blinded him for some time at least he has no proof about us & I hope to God that by degrees his suspicions will be lull'd & that we may form some plans for our meeting happily we must not despair but look forward that is the only way to support ourselves under our present unhappy situation & there is probability of many things happening to mend the present, so we think like philosophers and beleive everything is for the best & hope we may enjoy better days soon, and indeed I think it very probable my dearest and dear soul with this idea be happy if I knew you were so I should be more than half way to it as I assure you what concerns you is more to me than my own feelings upon any thing. God forbid there should be a Warr if you go what then remains for me but misery, dont lets think on that, no, its wrong one must not meet misfortunes, but how can I talk so, I'm sure that is not adopting the style I before proposed to look forward for better times.

* Details about 'a most horrid play' in which Her Ladyship was engaged.

I shall long to hear from you my dear life indeed I do I am afraid you had a miserable journey indeed I hope C—— will manage our letters as you send if she wont dont be uneasy I'll certainly contrive some other means to write & to hear from you—I shall write to C—— as soon as I've done this and persuade her all I can, I really think nobody can suspect anything as you said—so if you send to her the Thursday after you get this youll find another from me, I think I have better now conclude and write my letter to C—— as I imagine he will come home pretty soon, or I cou'd write to you, for ever, indeed my dearest Soul I could tire you to death with nonsense—

I shall only now add what I have often said to you my Dearest Friend that you may ever be assured of my tenderest and most sincere affections and that I shall ever remain in the truest sense of the expression Yrs Most Faithfully & Affectionately

You have thoro'ly convinced me of your regard for me which I prise above all things & can never thank you enough for the proofs you have given me of your Love.

The foregoing letter was inclosed in a cover directed

TO THE D OF C

In the cover was written as follows :

Pray my dear do tell my poor Friend Foulkes I very sincerely condole with him & advise him not to mind the old people if he loves her & she loves him to persuade her to run away with him, it will be delightful I wish to Goodness they wou'd.

To THE D—— OF C——.

MY DEAREST SOUL,—I'm in constant hopes of C—— sending me a letter from you and I'm very anxious to hear you are arrived safe I imagine and hope it will come to-morrow thank God I've some delightful news to tell you my Ld setts out for London next Wednesday. . . . I feer you cannot read this but I'm writing foast as I feer this will be too late for the poast— Everything goes on well and he is in very toller-able— . . . I feer this letter will be certainly too late so must conclude my dear Soul I do love you most sincerely indeed I'm out of my wits wth joy at the thought of seeing you my Dear Friend believe me ever most sincerely and affectionately Yrs.

What a scrawl I always write to you I'm really ashamed to a degree of myself my Dear

Soul . . . you may write in ink safely as he is sure to go on Wednesday shd any unforeseen Accident keep him which is totally improbable I would meet the Post Boy in the Lane once more dearest Soul Farewell.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

1792

DURING Reynolds' sojourn in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he was a pupil of Thomas Hudson the leading portrait painter of his time, he appears to have become acquainted with a Miss Weston, who with her mother resided in the same street: and to her the following letters which fill up a chapter in his biography were thus severally addressed 'To Miss Weston In Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.' The orthography of the originals is of course strictly retained.

[*Mahon*]* *December O.S. 10th 1749*

DEAR MISS WESTON,—My memory is so bad that I vow I dont remember whether or no I writ you about my expedition before I left

* Reynolds spent about two months in Port Mahon, whither he accompanied Captain Keppel and Lord Edgecumbe.

England, since, I am sure I have not, for I have writ to nobody. I sailed from Plimouth so long ago as May 11th and am got no further yet than Port Mahon, but before you shall receive this expect to be on tother side of the water.

I have been kept here near two months by an odd accident, I dont know whether to call it a lucky one or not, a fall from a horse down a precipice, which cut my face in such a manner as confined me to my room, so that I was forced to have recourse to painting as an amusement at first i have now finished as many portraits as will come to a hundred pounds the unlucky part of the Question is my lips are spoiled for kissing for my upper lip was so bruised that a great peice was cut off and the rest—* that I have but a—to look at, but in—won't perceive the defect.

So far it has been—tour to me that can— When we were at sea I amused myself with reading† . . . When I am settled at Rome I will write to you again to let you know how to direct to me in the meantime I shall be much obliged to you if you will call and see that my goods are safe and not spoiling I would write to him who has them could I think of his name I should be glad if you had a spare place in your

* The dashes are hiatuses in the original.

† He drinks in the Commodore's *cabbin*, and spends his time very *agreably*.

garret that could they be at your house From
your slave

J. REYNOLDS.

Two letters which Reynolds addressed to this lady after his arrival in Rome seem never to have reached her.

DEAR MISS WESTON, I wonder I have not receiv'd an answer to all the Letters I have sent you this is the third from Rome and one before from Mahon I suppose they have all miscarried so I take this opportunity of sending one by my good friend Mr Dalton and a Worthy man he is, I hope he will deliver this himself that you may be acquainted and when I return we shall have many agreeable jaunts together . . . send me all the news you know, not forgetting to say something about my goods I am My Dear Miss Weston, Yours

J. REYNOLDS.

P.S.—Don't forget to remember me to Mrs Sutherland Mr Hart and Mr Price if you ever see them and the Mr Pines* not forgetting the little girl at Westminster by the Park. Write

* The 'Pines' were John Pine, the engraver, and his sons, who were painters. The 'little girl at Westminster by the Park' lies buried in a long night.

me immediately by the first post Mr Dalton will tell you how to direct.

Rome, April 30, 1751.

DEAR MISS WESTON,—Your letter I received with a great deal of pleasure. . . . but nobody but me knew the Westminster girl a lack a lack she has been brought to bed and 'tis a fine chumming boy but who is Lord John? Well who would have thought it oh the nasty creature to have to do with a man. I am sorry you have been at the expense of paying for my Goods I shall take care to repay you with thanks when I return. . . . We are all extremely afflicted for the loss of the Prince of Wales* who certainly would have been a great Patron to Painters. Adieu. Remember me to mama.—
Yours

J. REYNOLDS.

The married life failed in proffering any inducement to Reynolds to disturb his placid career. He stood aloof from all temptation, and the instance of Miss Weston appears to have been, on her part, one of misplaced affection. She lived on neglected by him, it would seem, and unconsolated.

* Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of King George III, died at Leicester House, Leicester Square, in March 1751.

ROBERT BURNS

1796

OF many portraits of Burns, the best, the most interesting, is commonly supposed to be that painted by Alexander Nasmyth, in 1787, which now adorns the walls of the National Gallery, in Edinburgh. This picture was first engraved by John Benger for the Edinburgh Edition. It is a copy of this which illustrates the present work. Burns' features, according to Scott, were even more massive than they are represented in this portrait. His air was commonly melancholy. His dress was that of a sloven.

His love affairs, it is well-known, were numerous. There was always some new divinity in the fane of the heart of this passionate and systematic worshipper of the female sex. A bulky collection of correspondence bears witness to his method of epistolary courtship.

Besides numerous flirtations, more or less poetical, he had many serious amours. At the age of fifteen, 'Handsome Nell,' aged fourteen, whose real name was Miss Nelly Fitzpatrick, a fellow field labourer, attracted his attention. This 'bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass,' was 'coupled' with Caledonia's national poet. She initiated him in that delicious passion, which he says, in spite of 'acid disappointment, ginhouse prudence and bookworm philosophy I hold to be the first of human joys, and our dearest blessing here below.'

In 1767, the celebrated Jean Armour rose in the ascendant, one of the half-dozen 'proper young belles' of Mauchline. In 1780, Miss Ellison Begbie, who has been identified with the Mary Morison, held him a close prisoner. In 1786, he exchanged bibles as a testimony of lasting love with Miss Mary Campbell. In 1787, he was introduced to Mrs M'Lehose, the celebrated Clarinda. In 1787, little Miss Jenny Cruikshank, a 'young lady of budding loveliness,' (she was, in fact, not over twelve) received from him poetical expressions of admiration and, in 1787, he was in the 'full career of friendship' for Miss Margaret Chalmers and Miss Charlotte Hamilton. In 1790, he established intimate relations with Miss Anne Park, which led to the





BURNS.

birth of a daughter. Jean was by this time Burns' wife, he had acknowledged her in 1788, and the indignation of Clarinda followed as a matter of course. In 1794, Chloris claimed his wandering fancy. Chloris was a Mrs Whelpdale, who was deserted by her husband at the age of seventeen. 'The case,' says one of his biographers, 'was literally, as he himself states it. Fascinated by the beauty of this young creature, he erected her as the goddess of his inspiration, at the same time that respect for her intelligence and pity for her misfortunes were sufficient, supposing the absence of other restraints, to debar all unholy thoughts.*' In 1787, he met with an accident, from the overturning of a coach which injured his knee. He was to have drunk tea on the next day with the Mrs M'Lehose above mentioned, who, we are told with the proper flourish of trumpets, was 'the first cousin of Lord Craig.' His letter to this lady, accepting her invitation, was the first of a series of which the most interesting are quoted in the following pages. Mrs M'Lehose was born in 1759, and married James M'Lehose at the age of seventeen. He deserted her. At the time Miss Nimmo introduced Burns to her, she was the mother of three children. Mr M'Lehose, like most West Indian

* Chalmers' Burns, iv., 105.

planters, had got himself a family by a coloured mistress.

Burns gave himself the name Sylvander as he called the lady Clarinda. They seem to have been reciprocally enraptured, but their true love ran no smooth course as usual. Clarinda's husband living in the West Indies, who had left her and her children to starve in the streets of Edinburgh, claimed little regard, though she was legally bound to him. Sylvander, on the other hand, was morally bound by his marriage lines to Jean Armour. Neither law nor morality allowed the union which they both desired. A friendship more or less platonic subsisted for a while, after which the poet returned to Ayrshire, and married his 'Mary,' or Jean Armour, who had been turned out of doors by her father whilst her lover was prosecuting his written addresses to Mrs M'Lehose.

The letters present an interesting and strange mixture of formality and affectation, of sentiment and religion, of lax ethics and intense expression. The lady tries to convert the gentleman to Calvinism. The gentleman exhibits a sort of unsystematized scepticism to the lady. Clarinda chides Sylvander for addressing a married woman in so warm a style. She hopes they will meet in a future state. Sylvander reveres her religious

sentiments. Clarinda entreats him not to visit her in a sedan chair. Clarinda takes an affecting farewell on her departure for Jamaica, and Sylvander, who had by this time a little wearied of his 'charming Clarinda,' having engaged himself injudiciously with one Jenny Clow, implores Heaven's blessing on her head, consoles himself by drinking her health in society and in solitude, and composes the affecting melody 'My Nannie's awa.'

'Of all God's creatures' writes the eloquent Ayrshire agriculturist 'I ever could approach in the beaten way of friendship you struck me with the deepest, the strongest the most permanent impression. I say the most permanent because I know myself well.' Having regard to his friendship for handsome Nell, Jean Armour, Mary Morison, Annie Park, Jenny Clow, Mary Campbell, Charlotte Hamilton, Margaret Chalmers and many others, the reader is surprised at the extent and accuracy of Burns' knowledge of himself. On the other hand Mrs M'Lehose writes, 'Miss Nimmo can tell you how earnestly I had long pressed her to make us acquainted. I had a presentment that we would derive pleasure from the society of each other. You shall *not* leave town without seeing me if I should come along with good Miss Nimmo and call for

you. I am determined to see you and am ready to exclaim with Yorick, "Tut, are we not all relations?" She has certain nameless feelings which she perfectly comprehends, though the pen of Locke could not define them. These are 'delightful' when under the check of *reason* and *religion*. Sylvander answers this letter with considerable warmth and Clarinda thereupon asks, 'Do you remember that she whom you address is a married woman? or Jacob-like would you wait seven years, and even then perhaps be disappointed as he was.' Clarinda checks Sylvander with a happy mixture of dignity and mildness, says her biographer, bespeaking inward purity. 'Is it not too near an infringement of the sacred obligations of marriage, to bestow one's heart, wishes and thoughts upon another? Something on my soul whispers that it *approaches* criminality. I obey the voice; let me cast every kind feeling into the allowed bond of friendship. If 'tis accompanied with a shadow of a softer feeling, it shall be poured into the bosom of a merciful God! If a confession of my warmest, tenderest friendship does not satisfy you, *duty* forbids Clarinda should do more!'

Perhaps she had already determined to publish these letters, as she afterwards threatened to do, when Burns grew cold, in order to expose

him. Eventually they console themselves with the certainty of meeting in 'an unknown state of being' in which we must suppose Mrs Burns was to have no part or share. Clarinda will not admit a love which brings no certificate from the temple of Hymen, such a love she says is not to be heard at the bar of reason. Sylvander promises to remember her in his prayers.

If the reader cares to know the ultimate fate of Clarinda, the following lines contain it.

A lady (widow of the late Commissary-General Moodie of Van Dieman's Land) obliged Clarinda's grandson, with some observations from her Journal, from which we learn that his grandmother lived till eighty-two, and that her piety was beautifully illustrated in her allusions to the Scriptures, and that her memory was tenacious in reciting the Paraphrases, and that she quoted the tenth verse of the ninetieth Psalm with great accuracy and emphasis.*

The correspondence of Sylvander with Clarinda was first printed by Stewart of Glasgow in 1802 from copies which in an edition of 1843 are said by Mrs M'Lehose to have been disingenuously used by a 'literary gentleman of the name of Finlay, who asked for permission to make a

* In preface to 'Correspondence between Burns and Clarinda,' by W. C. M'Lehose, Edinb. 1843.

few extracts, and afterwards allowed the publications of all the letters entrusted to him, and added that this was done with my permission. Nothing could be more contrary to truth.'

The edition of 1843 was published by W. C. M'Lehose, a grandson of Burns' Clarinda, who died in 1841.

TO ELLISON BEGBIE *

I verily believe, my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. . . . I don't know how it is, my dear, for though except your company there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if so well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast, it extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy and

* The earliest specimen of Burns' prose composition, written probably in 1780. The lady was a rustic servant girl.

sympathise with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the Divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me in bestowing you. I mainly wish that he may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add, worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection is centered on her pocket, and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market to choose one who is stout and firm, and as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex which were designed to crown the pleasures of society! Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness, who have such notions. For my part, I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.

R. B.

TO ELLISON BEGBIE.

MY DEAR E,—I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love amongst people of our station in life. I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet, as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management that there are not more unhappy marriages than there usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves; some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest—there is something he knows not what pleases him, he knows not how in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us; and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you have to play when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere; and yet, though you

use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months or, at farthest, in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot.

I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me when I assure you that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you.

Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the marriage state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please—and a warm fancy with a flow of youthful spirits may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree.

If you will be so good as to grant my wishes,

and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest period of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age—even then when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me, I will regard my E. with the tenderest affection; and for this plain reason because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

‘Oh! happy state, when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty and nature law?’

I know were I to speak in such a style to many a girl who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous, but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology—I know your good-nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

R. B.

TO ELLISON BEGBIE.

I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though in every other

situation in life telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, nor never more puzzled for expression than when his passion is sincere and his intentions are honourable.

I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct; but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity of manners, to such a one in such circumstances, I can assure you my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised and which I shall invariably keep with you and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the acts of dissimulation and falsehood that I

am surprised they can be acted by any one in so noble, so generous a passion as virtuous love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life, there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport: but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and, I will add, of a Christian.

There is one thing my dear, which I earnestly request of you and it is this that you should soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further that if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour, and virtue of a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness—if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover,

R. B.

TO ELLISON BEGBIE.

I ought in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject.

I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal still it was peremptory, 'you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me'—what, without you, I never can obtain—'you wish me all kind of happiness.' It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am that sharing life with you would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages and your superior good taste do not so much strike me: these possibly may be met with in a few instances in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition with all the charming offspring of a warm, feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with, in such a degree, in this world.

All these charming qualities brightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever

met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface.

My imagination has fondly flattered myself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images and my fancy fondly brooded over them: but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress, still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you; and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose will soon leave this place, I wish to see or hear from you soon: and if an expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it, my dear Miss ——* (pardon me this dear expression for once). . . .

R. B.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

December 21st.

I beg your pardon, my dear 'Clarinda,' for the fragment scrawl I sent you yesterday. I really

* Mary. Ellison Begbie was probably Mary Morison. Another name for her was Peggy Alison. See poem bearing these names in his works.

don't know what I wrote. A gentleman for whose character, abilities and critical knowledge I have the highest veneration, called in just as I had begun the second sentence, and I would not make the porter wait. . . .* I do love you if possible still better for having so fine a taste and turn for poesy. I have again gone wrong in my usual unguarded way ; but you may erase the word and put esteem, respect, or any other tame Dutch expression you please in its place. I believe there is no holding converse or carrying on correspondence with an amiable woman much less a *gloriously-amiable, fine woman*, without some mixture of that delicious passion, whose most devoted slave I have more than once had the honour of being. But why be hurt or offended on that account? Can no honest man have a prepossession for a fine woman, but he must run his head against an intrigue? Take a little of the tender witchcraft of love and add it to the generous, the honourable sentiments of manly friendship, and I know but one more delightful morsel, which few, few in any rank ever taste. Such a composition is like adding cream to strawberries: it not only gives the fruit a more elegant richness but has a peculiar deliciousness of its own.

* Tells her how he read her 'lines' to the gentleman and how he was astonished at their excellence.

You cannot imagine Clarinda (I like the idea of Arcadian names in a commerce of this kind) how much store I have set by the hopes of your future friendship. I don't know if you have a just idea of my character, but I wish you to see me as I am. I am, as most people of my trade are, a strange Will-o'-wisp being; the victim, too frequently, of much imprudence and many follies. My great constituent elements are pride and passion; the first I have endeavoured to humanize into integrity and honour, the last makes me a devotee, to the warmest degree of enthusiasm, in love, religion or friendship: either of them or all together, as I happen to be inspired.

'Tis true I never saw you but once; but how much acquaintance did I form with you at that once! Do not think I flatter you or have a design upon you, Clarinda: I have too much pride for the one and too little cold cautiousness for the other; but of all God's creatures I ever could approach in the beaten way of acquaintance, you struck me with the deepest, the strongest, the most permanent impression. I say the most permanent, because I know myself well; and how far I can promise either on my prepossessions or powers.

Why are you unhappy? And why are so many of our fellow-creatures unworthy to belong

to the same species with you, blest with all they can wish? You have a hand, all benevolent to give,—why were you denied the pleasure? You have a heart formed, gloriously formed, for all the most refined luxuries of love,—why was that heart ever wrung? O Clarinda! Shall we not meet in a state, some yet unknown state of being where the lavish hand of Plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence, and where the chill north wind of Prudence shall never blow over the flowery fields of enjoyment? If we do not, man was made in vain! . . .*

Let me know how long your stay will be out of town. I shall count the hours till you inform me of your return. Cursed etiquette forbids your seeing me just now; and so soon as I can walk I must bid Edinburgh adieu. Lord, why was I born to see misery which I cannot relieve, and to meet with friends whom I cannot enjoy! I look back with the pangs of unavailing avarice on my loss in not knowing you sooner. All last winter, these three months past, what luxury of intercourse have I not lost! Perhaps, though, 'twas better for my peace. You see I am either above or incapable of dissimulation. I believe it is want of that particular genius. I despise design, be-

* He sympathises with her sorrows.

cause I want either coolness or wisdom to be capable of it. I am interrupted. Adieu, my dear Clarinda!

SYLVANDER.

Friday Evening.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER.

Friday Evening [Dec. 21].

I go to the country early to-morrow morning, but will be home by Tuesday,—sooner than I expected.

I have not time to answer yours as it deserves, nor, had I the age of Methusalem, could I answer it in kind. I shall grow *vain*. Your praises were enough,—but those of a Dr Gregory superadded! Take care, many a ‘glorious’ woman has been undone by having her head turned.

‘Know you?’ I know you far better than you do me. Like yourself, I am a bit of an enthusiast. In religion and friendship, quite a bigot—perhaps I could be so in love too; but everything dear to me in heaven and earth forbids! This is my fixed principle; and the person who would dare to endeavour to remove it, I would hold as my chief enemy. Like you, I am incapable of dissimulation; nor am I, as you suppose, unhappy. Possessed of fine children

—competence—fame—friends kind and attentive
 —what a monster of ingratitude should I be in
 the eye of Heaven were I to style myself un-
 happy! . . . * Religion the only refuge of the
 unfortunate, has been my balm in every woe!
 O! could I make her appear to you as she has
 done to me! Instead of ridiculing her tenets,
 you would fall down and worship her very
 semblance wherever you found it!

I will write you again at more leisure, and
 notice other parts of yours. I send you a simile
 upon a character I don't know if you are
 acquainted with. I am confounded at your
 admiring my lines. I shall begin to question
 your taste—but Dr G. ! when I am low-spirited
 (which I am at times), I shall think of this as a
 restorative.

Now for the simile. †

Good-night, for Clarinda's 'heavenly eyes'
 need the earthly aid of sleep. Adieu!

CLARINDA.

P.S.—I entreat you not to mention our
 corresponding to one on earth. Though I've
 conscious innocence, my situation is a delicate
 one.

* Sentiment, philosophic and religious.

† Simile, comparing Burns to the sun, omitted.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

[January 4.]

You are right, my dear Clarinda ; a friendly correspondence goes for nothing except one write their undisguised sentiments. Yours please me for their intrinsic merit, as well as because they are yours : which, I assure you, is to me a high recommendation.

Your religious sentiments, madam, I revere. If you have, on some suspicious evidence, from some lying oracle, learnt that I despise or ridicule so sacredly-important a matter as real religion, you have, my Clarinda, much misconstrued your friend, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus!' . . .*

I can easily enter into the sublime pleasures that your strong imagination and keen sensibility must derive from religion, particularly if a little in the shade of misfortune ; but I own I cannot, without a marked grudge, see Heaven totally engross so amiable, so charming a woman as my friend Clarinda ; and should be very well pleased at a circumstance that would put it in the power of somebody, happy somebody ! to divide her attention with all the delicacy and tenderness of an earthly attachment. . . .†

* Etc.

† Compliments her on her grammar and verses.

Do not tell me that you are pleased when your friends inform you of your faults. I am ignorant what they are ; but I am sure they must be such evanescent trifles compared with your personal and mental accomplishments, that I would despise the ungenerous narrow soul who would notice any shadow of imperfections you may seem to have any other way than in the most delicate agreeable raillery. Coarse minds are not aware how much they injure the keenly feeling tie of bosom friendship, when in their foolish officiousness they mention what nobody cares for recollecting. People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity, that fires at being trifled with or lowered, or even too nearly approached.

You need make no apology for long letters ; I am even with you. Many Happy New Years to you, charming Clarinda ! I can't dissemble, were it to shun perdition. He who sees you as I have done, and does not love you, deserves to be damned for his stupidity ! He who loves you and would injure you deserves to be doubly damned for his villany ! Adieu.

SYLVANDER.

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

January 5th.

Some days, some nights, nay, some *hours*, like the 'ten righteous persons in Sodom' save the rest of the vapid, tiresome, miserable months and years of life. One of these *hours* my dear Clarinda blest me with yester night.

'One well spent hour,
In such a tender circumstance for friends,
Is better than an age of common time.'—THOMSON.

Your verses I shall muse on—deliciously—as I gaze on your image, in my mind's eye, in my heart's core. I am truly happy your headache is better. O! how can pain or evil be so daringly, unfeelingly, cruelly savage as to wound so noble a mind, so lovely a form!

SYLVANDER.

Saturday, Noon.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER.

Edinburgh, 7th March 1788.

. . . I hope I shall never live to reproach you with unkindness. You never ought to put off till you 'have time to do justice to your letters.' I have sufficient memorials of your

abilities in that way; and last week two lines to have said 'How do ye, my Clarinda,' would have saved me days and nights of cruel disquietude. 'A word to the wise' you know . . . I see my Sylvander will be all I wish him before he leaves this world. Do you remember what simple eulogium I pronounced on you, when Miss Nimmo asked what I thought of you:—'He is ane of God's ain, but his time's no come yet.' It was like a speech from your worthy mother,—whom I revere. . . .

In the name of wonder how could you spend ten hours with such a —— as Mr Pattison? What a despicable character! Religion! he knows only the name. . . Don't call me severe; I hate all who would turn the 'Grace of God into licentiousness.' . .

Yesterday morning in bed I happened to think of you. I said to myself, 'My bonnie Lizzie Baillie' etc., and laughed; but I felt a delicious swell of heart, and my eyes swam in tears. I know not if your sex ever feel the burst of affection; 'tis an emotion indescribable. You see I've grown a fool since you left me. You know I was rational when you first knew me, but I always grow more foolish, the farther I am from those I love; by and by I suppose I shall be insane altogether? . . Oh Sylvander, I

am great in my own eyes when I think how high I am in your esteem! . . . When you meet young beauties think of Clarinda's affection—of her situation—of how much her happiness depends on you.

Farewell till we meet. God be with you.

CLARINDA.

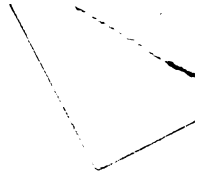
SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

Friday, Nine o'clock, Night (11th April).

I am just now come in and have read your letter. The first thing I did was to thank the Divine Disposer of events that he had such happiness in store for me as the connexion I have with you. Life, my Clarinda, is a weary, barren path; and woe be to him or her that ventures on it alone! For me, I have my dearest partner of my soul. Clarinda and I will make out our pilgrimage together. . . .

Will you open with satisfaction and delight a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you to death, through death and for ever. Oh! Clarinda, what do I owe to Heaven for blessing me with such a piece of exalted excellence as you; I call over your idea as a miser counts over his treasure. . . .

To-morrow night according to your own





CLARINDA.

Direction, I shall watch the window; 'tis the star
 that guides me to Paradise. The great relish to
 all is that Honour, that Innocence, that Religion,
 are the witnesses and guarantees of our happiness.

'The Lord God knoweth, and perhaps Israel *
 he shall know' my love and your merit. Adieu,
 Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my
 prayers.

SYLVANDER.

Many letters after this period appear to have
 been lost or destroyed. The next letter—how
 changed is the key thereof! how ominous the
 commencement!

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

March 9th 1789.

MADAM,— . . . You will pardon me if I
 do not carry my complaisance so far as humbly to
 acquiesce in the name of Villain, merely out of com-
 pliment to your opinion: much as I esteem your
 judgment, and warmly as I regard your worth.

I have already told you, and I again aver it,
 that at the period of time alluded to I was not
 under the smallest moral tie to Mrs B——,† nor
 did I nor could I then know all the powerful

* The reference to Israel is dark, Burns is known to have been in debt.

† His wife.

circumstances that omnipotent necessity was busy laying in wait for me— . . .

Was I to blame, Madam, in being the distracted victim of charms which I affirm it no man ever approached with impunity? . . .

When I shall have regained your good opinion perhaps I may venture to solicit your friendship, but be that as it may, the first of her sex I ever knew shall always be the object of my warmest good wishes.

CLARINDA TO SYLVANDER.

(November 1791).

SIR,—I take the liberty of addressing a few lines on behalf of your old acquaintance Jenny Clow who to all appearance is at this moment dying . . .* In circumstances so distressing to whom can she so naturally look for aid as to the father of her child, the man for whose sake she has suffered many a sad and anxious night shut from the world with no other companion than guilt and solitude?

You have now an opportunity to evince that you indeed possess those fine feelings you have delineated so as to claim the just admiration of your country. I am convinced I need add nothing

* Detail of distressing circumstances.

farther to persuade you to act as every consideration of humanity as well as gratitude must dictate. I am, Sir, Your sincere well-wisher,

A. M.*

SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA.

Dumfries, 23 November 1791.

It is extremely difficult, my dear Madam, for me to deny a lady anything By the way I have this moment a letter from her, † with a paragraph or two conceived in so stately a style that I would not pardon it in any created being except herself; but as the subject interests me much I shall answer it to you, as I do not know her present address. I am sure she must have told you of a girl, a Jenny Clow, who had the misfortune to make me a father, with contritions I own it contrary to the laws of our most excellent constitution in our holy Presbyterian hierarchy.

Mrs M—— tells me a tale of the poor girl's distress that makes my very heart weep blood.

I shall do myself the very great pleasure to

* *Spretæ injuria formæ.* Burns about this time had become an idolater, with his usual sensibility to female beauty, of one Deborah Davies.

'He hugs the chain and owns the reign
Of conquering lovely Davies.'

He speaks to Clarinda in the third person.

call for you when I come to town and repay you
the sum your goodness shall have advanced . . . *
and most obedient

ROBERT BURNS.

* He asks her to give out of her own pocket five shillings to the 'poor wench' in his name.

HORACE WALPOLE

1797

IN the drawing-room of his friend, Lady Herries, Walpole first formed the acquaintance of those the fair and accomplished sisters, Mary and Agnes Berry, with whose graceful charms and captivating manners, the happiness of his closing years became so intimately interwoven.

Their father a gentleman of moderate private fortune, and of cultured tastes, had taken every opportunity of improving their education so that they might not lack those refined and intellectual attractions which would render them popular in society. 'Mr Berry,' wrote Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 'carried his daughters for two or three years to France and Italy, and they are returned the best informed and the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and being qualified to talk on

every subject nothing is so easy and agreeable as their conversation, nor more apposite than their answers and observations. The eldest I discovered by chance, understands Latin, and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly, and has copied admirably Lady Di's (Diana Beauclerk) gipsies, which I lent, though for the first time of her attempting colours.

They are of pleasing figures ; Mary, the eldest, sweet, with fine dark eyes that are very lively when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale. Agnes, the younger has an agreeable, sensible countenance, hardly to be called handsome, but almost. She is less animated than Mary, but seems, out of deference to her sister, to speak seldomer, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents.'

Three years afterwards Walpole writes to Lady Ossory. 'In short, they are extraordinary beings, and I am proud of my partiality for them ; and since the ridicule can only fall on me, and not on them, I care not a straw for its being said that I am in love with one of them ; people shall choose which, it is as much with both as either, and I am infinitely too old to regard *qu'en dit on.*'

Notwithstanding, however, the disclaimer of

'partiality,' on the part of Walpole we need only very cursorily glance over his correspondence, at this period, writes Mr Jesse, to satisfy ourselves how entirely the elder sister was his favourite, if not his passion. 'So long, for instance, as her home was near his, either in London or the neighbourhood of Twickenham, he seems to have been thoroughly happy and contented, But this was not the case when, for any cause, she was away. If absent with her father in Italy, if paying visits to friends in Yorkshire or elsewhere, we find him 'from time to time either expressing himself inconsolable during her absence, or else anticipating her return with something very much resembling the impatient ardour of a youthful lover.' Towards the end of June, 1789 Miss Berry left London for Yorkshire, and Horace Walpole is full of anxiety and alarm because the letter to be written on their journey had not been received, and makes no secret of his affectionate regret for the loss of their company :—

I am not at all consoled for my double loss : my only comfort is that I flatter myself the journey and air will be of service to you both. Tonton* does not miss you so much as I do, not having so good a taste ; for he is grown very

* A dog of Miss Berry's, left in Horace Walpole's care during their absence.

fond of *me*, and I return it for your sakes, though he deserves it too, for he is perfectly good-natured and tractable; but he is not beautiful, like his 'god-dog,' as Mr Selwyn, who dined here on Saturday, called my poor late favourite,* especially as I have had him clipped. . . .

I passed so many evenings of the last fortnight with you, that I almost preferred it to our two honeymoons, and consequently am the more sensible to the deprivation; and how dismal was Sunday evening, compared to those of last Autumn! If you both felt as I do, we might surpass any event in the Annals of Dunmore. Oh! what a prodigy it would be if a husband and two wives should present themselves and demand the fitch of bacon, on swearing that not one of the three in a year and a day had wished to be unmarried? For my part, I know that my affection has done nothing but increase; though, were there but one of you, I should be ashamed of being so strongly attached at my age; being in love with both, I glory in my passion, and think it a proof of my sense.

Why should not two affirmatives make a negative, as well as the reverse? and then a double love will be wisdom—for what is wisdom in reality but a negative?

* The dog which had been bequeathed to Walpole by Madame du Deffand at her death, and which was also called Tonton.

Wednesday.—I calculated, too rightly; no letter to-day! Yet I am not proud of my computation; I had rather have heard of you to-day; it would have looked like keeping your promise; it has a bad air your forgetting me so early; nay, and after your scoffing me for supposing that you would not write till your arrival, I don't know where.

You see I think of *you*, and write every day, though I cannot despatch my letter till you have sent me a direction. Much the better, indeed, I am for your not going to Switzerland. Yorkshire is in the glaciers for me. . . .

Thursday night—

Despairing beside a clear stream
A shepherd forsaken was laid.

Not very close to the stream, but within doors in sight of it, for in this damp weather, a lame old Colin cannot lie and despair without any comfort on a wet bank. . . I dread one of you being ill. Mr Batt and the Abbé Nicholls dined with me to-day and I could talk of you *en pais de connoissance*. They tried to persuade me that I have no cause to be in a fright about you, but I have such perfect faith in the kindness of both of you, as I have in your possessing every other virtue, that I cannot believe but some sinister accident

must have prevented my hearing from you. I wish Friday was come.

Feb. 26.—Still I have no letter ; you cannot all three be ill, and if anyone is, I flatter myself another would have written. Next to your having met with some ill luck, I should be mortified at being forgotten so suddenly. Of any other vexation I have no fear. So much goodness and good sense as you both possess, would make me perfectly easy if I were really your husband. I must then suspect some accident and I shall have no tranquillity till a letter puts me out of pain. Jealous I am not, for two young ladies cannot have run away with their father to Gretna Green. Hymen, O Hymenæe ! bring me good news to-morrow and a direction too, or you do nothing.

Saturday.—At last I have got a letter, and you are well ! I am so pleased, that I forget the four uneasy days I have passed. At present I have neither time nor paper to say more, for our post turns on its heels and goes out the instant it is come in. . . .

Adieu, adieu, adieu all three.

Your dutiful son-in-law, most affectionate husband.

H. W

The next letter was written on June 30, 1789 :—

STRAWBERRY HILL.

I am more of an old fondle-wife than I suspected when I could put myself into such a fright on not hearing from you exactly on the day when I had settled I should ; but you had promised to write on the road, and though you did, your letter was not sent to the post at the first stage, as Almighty Love concluded it would be, and as Almighty Love would have done, and so he imagined some dreadful calamity must have happened to you. But you are safe under grand maternal wings, and I will say no more on what has happened. Pray present my duty to grand-mama, and let her know what a promising young grandson she has got.

Were there any such thing as sympathy at a distance of two hundred miles, you would have been in a mightier panic than I was, for on Saturday se'ennight, going to open the glass case in the tribune, my foot caught in the carpet, and I fell with my whole weight against the corner of the marble altar on my side, and bruised the muscle so badly that for ten days I could not move without screaming. I am convinced that I should have broken a rib, but I fell on the cavity whence two of my ribs had been removed that

are gone to Yorkshire. I am much better both of my bruise and of my lameness, and shall be ready to dance at my own wedding when my wives return. . . .

You are not the first Eurydice that has sent her husband to the devil, as you have kindly proposed to me; but I will not undertake the jaunt; for if old Nicholas Pluto should enjoin me not to look back to you, I should certainly forget the prohibition, like my predecessor. Besides, I am a little too old to take a voyage twice, which I am so soon to repeat, and should be laughed at by the good folks on the other side of the water, if I proposed coming back for a twinkling only. No, I chuse as long as I can

Still with my fav'rite Berrier to remain.

.

I am delighted that my next letter is to come from wife the second. I love her as much as you, and I am sure you like that I should. I should not love either so much, if your affection for each other were not so mutual; I observe and watch all your ways and doings, and the more I observe you, the more virtues I discover in both. Nay, depend upon it, if I discover a fault you shall hear of it.

You came too perfect into my hands, to let you be spoilt by indulgence. All the world admires you, yet you have contracted no vanity, advertised no pretensions, are simple and good as nature made you, in spite of all your improvements. Mind *you* and *yours* are always, from my lips and pen, of what grammarians call the *common of two*, and signify *both*, so I shall repeat that memoradum no more. . . .

The next extract from a letter, dated July 15, 1789 is amusing :—

I have scarce left myself any room for conjugal douceurs ; but as you see how very constantly you are in my thoughts, I am at least not fickle, on the contrary, I am rather disposed to jealousy. You have written to Mr Pepys, and he will have anticipated my history of his being established in Palazzo Dudley ; and that will make this letter more and more wrinkled. Well ! he cannot send you ‘ Bonner’s Ghost,’ and I shall have the satisfaction of tantalizing you four or five days longer —if this is not love—the deuce is in it. Does one grudge that the beloved object should be

pleased by anyone but oneself, unless beloved object there be ?

Do not be terrified however ; jealousy most impartially divided between Two can never come to great violence. Wife Agnes has indeed given me no cause, but my affection for both is so compounded into one love that I can think of neither separately. Frenchmen often call their mistress *mes Amours*, which would be no wish in me. A propos, Lady Lucau told me t'other day of two young Irish couples who ran away from Dublin, and landed in Wales, and were much surprised to find that Holyhead was not Gretna Green. Adieu ! *mes Amours* !

Four days later he writes :—

EX OFFICINA ARBUTIANA,

July 19, 1789.

Such unwriting wives I never knew ! and a shame it is for an author, and what is more, for a printer, to have a Couple so unlettered. I can find time amidst all the hurry of my shop to write small quartos to them continually. In France, where nuptiality is not the virtue the most in request, a wife will write to her consort, tho' the *doux billet* should contain but two sentences, of which I will give you a precedent :

A lady sent the following to her spouse: 'Je vous écrit, parceque je n'ai rien à faire; et je finis, parceque je n'ai rien à vous dire.' I do not wish for quite so laconic a poulet; besides, your ladyships *can* write.

The next letter was dated Strawberry Hill, July 29, 1789.

I have received two dear letters from you of the 28th and 29th, and though you do not accuse me, but say a thousand kind things to me in the most agreeable manner, I allow my ancientry, and that I am an old, fond, jealous, and peevish husband, and quarrel with you, if I do not receive a letter exactly at the moment I please to expect one. You talk of mine, but if you knew how I like yours, you would not wonder that I am impatient, and even unreasonable in my demands. However, though I own my faults, I do not mean to correct them.

I have such pleasure in *your* letter (I am sorry I am here forced to speak in the *singular number*, which by the way is an Iricism) that I *will* be cross with you, if you do not write to me perpetually.

How captivated Walpole was at this time by the charms of his young friends, may be gathered from the following extract :

Strawberry Hill, August 13, 1789.

I have received at once most kind letters from you both, too kind, for you both talk of gratitude. Mercy on me! which is the obliged, and which is the gainer? Two charming beings, whom everybody likes and approves, and who yet can be pleased with the company and conversation and old stories of a Methusalem? or I, who at the end of my days have fallen into more agreeable society than ever I knew at any period of my life? I will say nothing of your persons, sense, or accomplishments, but where, united with all those, could I find so much simplicity, void of pretensions and affectation? This from any other man would sound like compliment and flattery; but in me, who have appointed myself your guardian, it is a duty to tell you of your merits, that you may preserve and persevere in them. If ever I descry any faults, I will tell you as freely of them. Be just what you are, and you may dare my reproofs.

I will restrain even reproaches, tho' in jest, if it puts my sweet Agnes to the trouble of writing

when she does not care for it. It is the extreme quality of my affection for both that makes me jealous if I do not receive equal tokens of friendship from both ; and though nothing is more just than the observation of two sisters repeating the same ideas, yet never was that remark so ill applied. Tho' your minds are so congenial, I have long observed how originally each of you expresses her thoughts. I could repeat to you expressions of both, which I remember as distinctly as if I had only known either of you.

For the future there shall be perfect liberty among us. Either of you shall write when she pleases ; while my letters are inseparably meant to both, tho' the direction may contain but one name, lest the postman should not comprehend a double address. . . .

The following letter was addressed to Somerset Street, to greet Miss Berry on her return from the country :—

Strawberry Hill,
Wednesday Night, Sept. 30, 1789.

When an ancient gentleman marries, it is his best excuse that he wants a nurse, which I

suppose was the motive of Solomon, who was the wisest of mortals, and a most puissant and opulent monarch, for marrying a thousand wives in his old age when, I conclude, he was very gouty. I, in humble imitation of that sapient king, and no mines of Ophir flowing into my exchequer, espoused a couple of helpmates, but being less provident than the son of David, suffered both to ramble into the land of Goshen when I most wanted their attendance.

I tell a great story: I did not want you: on the contrary, I am delighted that you did not accept my invitation. I should have been mortified to the death to have had you in my house when I am lying helplessly on my couch, or going to bed early from pain. . . . Be sure that I find you both looking remarkably well;—not that I have any reason for wishing it, but as I am not able to nurse you. Adieu!

It was at the close of the year that Horace Walpole inscribed his Catalogue of Strawberry Hill to the Misses Berry.

To
 The Dear Sisters
 MARY and AGNES BERRY
 This Description
 of
 His Villa at Strawberry Hill
 Which they often made delightfull
 By their Company, Conversation, and Talents,
 is offered
 by
 HORACE WALPOLE,
 From a heart overflowing with
 Admiration, Esteem, and Friendship
 Hoping
 That long after he shall be no more,
 It may, while amusing them,
 Recall some kind thoughts
 Of a most devoted
 And affectionate humble friend

December 1789.

The following letter is from Miss Berry, and seemingly refers to Walpole's efforts to get a house for them; Mr Berry having promised to spend some time at Twickenham during August:—

Sunday Evening.

A thousand thanks, my good sir, for your earnestness last night, and your kind attention this morning about a house for us. My father goes to Twickenham to-morrow or next day, and

carries with him our best wishes to find a place in that neighbourhood ; he will enquire after the house you mention, the situation of which I do not immediately recollect, but be assured a short distance from Strawberry Hill will be one of the first recommendations to us.

To our many obligations to you we must add that of the *very* agreeable evening we spent last night—I fear we shall not meet often this week, except you are to be at Lady J. Penn's on Wednesday ; perhaps not at all, for we go on Thursday to the Duke of Argyll's, and shall probably stay till Saturday.

Allow us, therefore, to lay a plan already for next week, and to beg the favour of seeing you to-morrow se'nnight, which will be the twenty-first. Without a little arrangement and consideration beforehand, I find one's time passes away in London, '*nec recte, nec suaviter,*' while we ensure both, when we are lucky enough to spend the evening with you.

M. BERRY.

The short notice below has no date, but is interesting as coming from Miss Berry.

Saturday Afternoon.

Was I to begin thanking you, when should I

have done? And what is three tickets, or three dozen tickets for any show upon earth in comparison of my other obligations to you, in comparison of that flattering regard, that lively interest, that real friendship with which upon every occasion, you act towards us?

Believe me, and it is all I feel able to say, it is not lost upon us; we feel it all, and the impossibility of ever thanking you for *such* obligations. For tickets to the trial,* to anybody else I could write a fine note, to you it is impossible.

M. B.

On the 10th October, Mr Berry and his daughter left England, and the following letter written on that day is touchingly descriptive of the writer's feelings on this occasion.

*Sunday, Oct. 10, 1790,
the day of your departure.*

Is it possible to write to my beloved friends and refrain from speaking of my grief for losing you, though it is but the continuation of what I have felt ever since I was stunned by your intention of going abroad this autumn. Still I will not tire you with it often.

* Probably of Warren Hastings.

In happy days, I smiled and called you *my dear wives*—now, I can only think of you as *darling children*, of whom I am bereaved. As such I have loved and do love you ; and charming as you both are, I have had no occasion to remind myself that I am past seventy-three.

Your hearts, your understandings, your virtues, and the cruel injustice of your fate, have interested me in everything that concerns you, and so far from having occasion to blush for any unbecoming weakness, I am proud of my affection for you, and very proud of your condescending to pass so many hours with a very old man, when everybody admires you, and the most insensible allow that your good sense and information (I speak of both) have formed you to converse with the most intelligent of our sex as well as your own ; and neither can tax you with airs of pretension or affectation. Your simplicity and natural ease set off all your other merits—all these graces are lost to me, alas ! when I have no time to lose !

Sensible, as I am to my loss, it will occupy but part of my thoughts till I know you safely landed, and arrived safely at Turin. Not till you are there, and I learn so, will my anxiety subside and settle into steady, fresh sorrow. I looked at every weather cock as I came along the road

to-day, and was happy to see every one point north-east, may they do so to-morrow!

I found here the frame for Wolsey,* and to-morrow morning Kirgate will place him in it, and then I shall begin pulling the little parlour to pieces, that it may be hung anew to receive him. I have also obeyed Miss Agnes, tho' with regret, for on trying it, I found that her Arcadia would fit the place of the picture she condemned, which shall, therefore, be hung in its room, tho' the latter should give way to nothing else, nor shall be laid aside, but shall hang where I shall see it almost as often. I long to hear that its dear paintress is well; I thought her not at all so last night. You will tell me the truth, though she in her own case, and in that alone, allows herself mental reservation.

Forgive me for writing nothing to-night but about you two and myself. Of what can I have thought else? I have not spoken to a single person but my own servants since we parted last night. I found a message here from Miss Howe to invite me for this evening. Do you think I have not preferred staying at home to write to you, as this must go to London to-morrow by the coach to be ready for Tuesday's post? My future letters shall talk of other things, whenever

* Drawing by Miss Agnes Berry.

I know anything worth repeating—or perhaps any trifle, for I am determined to forbid myself lamentations that would weary you; and the frequency of my letters will prove there is no forgetfulness.

If I live to see you again, you will then judge whether I am changed—but a friendship so rational and so pure as mine is, and so equal for both, is not likely to have any of the fickleness of youth, when it has none of its other ingredients. It was a sweet consolation to the short time that I may have left, to fall into such a society—no wonder then that I am unhappy at that consolation being abridged.

I pique myself on no philosophy but what a long use and knowledge of the world had given me, the philosophy of indifference to most persons and events. I do pique myself on not being ridiculous at this very late period of my life; but when there is not a grain of passion in my affection for you two, and when you both have the good sense not to be displeased at my telling you so (though I hope you would have despised me for the contrary), I am not ashamed to say that your loss is heavy to me; and that I am only reconciled to it by hoping that a winter in Italy, and the journies and sea-air will be very beneficial to two constitutions so delicate as yours.

Adieu! My dearest friends. It would be tautology to subscribe a name to a letter, every line of which would suit no other man in the world but the writer.

During their absence, Walpole seems to have lived in a chronic state of anxiety; for, unless letters came to him regularly, he was uneasy as to the safety and health of his young friends:—

This morning before I left Park Place, I had the relief and joy of receiving your letter of Oct. 29, from Lyons. It would have been still more welcome if dated from Turin; but as you have met with no impediments so far, I trust you get out of France as well as through it. I do hope that Miss *Agnes* is better, as you say,—but when one is very anxious about a person, credulity does not take long strides in proportion. . . .

You make me smile by desiring me to continue my affection. Have I so much time left for inconstancy? For three score years and ten I have not been very fickle in my friendships—in all those years I never found such a pair as you and your sister. Should I meet with a superior pair—but then they must not be deficient in any of the qualities which I found in you two—why, perhaps I may change; but with that double

mortgage on my affections, I do not think you are in much danger of losing them. You shall have timely notice if a second couple drops out of the clouds and falls in my way.

In a letter dated Feb. 4th 1791, Walpole writes thus despondingly :—

Last post I sent you as cheerful a letter as I could, to convince you I was recovering. This will be less gay because I have much more pain in my mind than in my limbs. I see and thank you for all the kindness of your intention ; but as it has the contrary effect from what you expect, I am forced for my own peace to beseech you not to continue a manœuvre that only tantalises and wounds me.

In your last you put together many friendly words to give me hopes of your return ; but can I be so blind as not to see that they are vague words? Did you mean to return in autumn would you not say so? Would the more artful arrangement of words be so kind as those few simple ones? In fact I have for some time seen how little you mean it, and for your sakes, I cease to desire it.

His young friends seem to have fully realized and appreciated his disappointment at the idea of not seeing them, and later on he writes touchingly in reply to a letter received from Miss Berry.

*B. Squ., Monday Evening,
March 21, 1791.*

I am returned, and find the only letter I dreaded, and the only one I trust that I shall ever not be impatient to receive from you. Tho' ten thousand times kinder than I deserve, it wounds my heart, as I find I have hurt two of the persons I love the best upon earth, and whom I am most constantly studying to please and serve. That I soon repented of my murmurs you have seen by my subsequent letters.

The truth, as you may have perceived, tho' no excuse, was, that I had thought myself dying and should never see you more; that I was extremely weak and low when Mrs D's letter arrived, and mentioned her supposing I should not see you till spring twelvemonth. That terrible sentence recalled Mr Batt's being the first to assure me of your going abroad, when I had concluded you had laid aside the design. I did sincerely allow that in both instances you had acted from tenderness in concealing your intentions; but as I knew I could better bear the

information from yourselves than from others, I thought it unfriendly to let me learn from others what interested me so deeply.

Yet I do not in the least excuse my conduct. No, I condemn it in every light, and shall never forgive myself if you do not promise me to be guided entirely by your own convenience and inclinations about your return.

I am perfectly well again, and just as likely to live one year as half an one. Indulge your pleasure in being abroad while you are there. I am now reasonable enough to enjoy your happiness as my own ; and since you are most kind when I least deserve it, how can I express my gratitude for giving up the scruple that was so distressing to me !

Convince me you are in earnest by giving me notice that you will write to Charing Cross, while the Neapolitans are at Florence.* I will look on that as a clearer proof of your forgiving my criminal letter than your return before you like it.

It is most sure that nothing is more solid or less personal than my friendship for you two ; and even my complaining letter, tho' unjust and

* His correspondents, to settle his mind as to the certainty of their return at the time they had promised, had assured him that no financial difficulties should stand in the way, which is what he means by sending to Charing Cross (to Drummond, his banker). No such difficulty occurred. The correspondence, therefore, with Charing Cross never took place.—M.B.

unreasonable, proved that the nearer I thought myself to quitting the world, the more my heart was set on my two friends. Nay, *they* had occupied the busiest moments of my illness, as well as the most fretful ones.

Forgive then, my dearest friends, what could proceed from nothing but too impatient affection. You say most truly you did not deserve my complaints; your patience and temper under them make me but the more in the wrong; and to have hurt you, who have known but too much grief, is such a contradiction to the whole turn of my mind ever since I knew you, that I believe my weakness from illness was beyond even what I suspected.

It is sure that when I am in my perfect senses, the whole bent of my thoughts is to promote your and your sister's felicity, and you know nothing can give me satisfaction like your allowing me to be of use to you. I speak honestly, notwithstanding my unjust letter, I had rather serve you than see you. Here let me finish this subject; I do not think I shall be faulty with you again.

That ever I should give *you two* an uneasy moment! Oh! forgive me—yet I do not deserve pardon in my own eyes, and less in my own heart.

In March, Miss Berry met with an accident in the neighbourhood of Pisa, having fallen from a bank, and received a deep cut on the nose. As might be imagined, this elicited from Walpole a letter couched in the most sympathetic and tender language.

*Strawberry Hill, Sunday Night,
April 3, 1791.*

Oh! what a shocking accident! oh! how I detest your going abroad more than I have done yet in my crossiest mood! You escaped the storm on the 10th October that gave me such an alarm; you passed unhurt through the cannibals of France and their republic of Ladrones and Poissardes, who terrified me sufficiently—but I never expected that you would dash yourself to pieces at Pisa. You say I love truth, and that you have told me the exact truth, but how can fear believe?

You say you slept *part* of the night after your fall. Oh! but the other part! Was not you feverish? How can I wait above a month for answers to an hundred questions I want to ask; and how a week for another letter! A little comfort I have had since I received the horrid account; I have met Mrs Lockart at Lady Hesketh's, and she has assured me that there is

a very good surgeon at Pisa—if he is, he must have blooded you directly. How could you be well enough to write the next day? Why did not Miss Agnes for you? But I conclude she was not recovered enough by your fall.

When I am satisfied that you have not hurt yourself more than you own, I will indulge my concern about the outside of your nose, about which I shall not have your indifference. I am not in love with you, yet fully in love enough not to bear any damage done to that perfect nose, or to any of all your beautiful features; then, too, I shall scold your thoughtlessness.

How I hate a party of pleasure! it never turns out well; fools fall out, and sensible people fall down. Still I thank you a million of times for writing yourself; if Miss Agnes had written for you, I confess I should have been ten times more alarmed than I am, and yet I am alarmed enough.

My sweet Agnes, I feel for you too, tho' you have not the misery of being a thousand miles from your wounded sister, nor are waiting for a second account. The quantity of blood she lost, has, I trust, prevented any fever. I would ask for every tiny circumstance, but alas! I must wait above a month for an answer. . . .

In the summer of the same year, Walpole had another cause for anxiety, for Miss Berry was ill.

Strawberry Hill. Aug. 3, 1791.

How cruel to know you ill at such distance! how shocking to must have patience, when one has none! . . . Your fever I am persuaded was no light one. Your fêtes and balls and the heat have occasioned your illness, you both left England in search of health, and yet have done as much as you could have performed in London, where at least the cold can tolerate crowds and fatigue. . . I longed to see Agnes's writing, and she never could have it sent more apropos, since there was occasion for it—you yourself were both kind and unkind to write so much—but burn the French! Why write so much about them? For heaven's sake be more careful; you are both of you delicate and far from strong. You bid me take care of myself, to what purpose do I cocker myself against November, if you two fling away your healths, nay, I will not look so early as to November.

Do not I implore you set out in great heats. Fatigue and hot bad inns may lay you up where there is no assistance. Oh! I now feel again

all the aversion I felt last year to your journey. Travel slowly, I beseech you; I had rather wait months for you, than have you run any risk. Surely you will keep very quiet till you begin your journey, and perfectly recruit your health.

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Thursday Noon.

I am not at all more easy, tho' I have slept since I heard of your fever. Your journey haunts me; . . . everything terrifies me for you; tho' I have little faith in a speedy invasion of France, yet I believe it, when you may be to pass thro' armies and camps.

My dear dear wives, be cautious! No risks by land or sea, in short, I am unquiet to the greatest degree. I had almost forgot to thank you about the medals: bring me but yourselves safe and in good health, and I care about nothing else. Yes, I do, for another letter.

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P.S.—My dearest Agnes, tho' you have no fever, yet as you have undergone the same heats and fatigues with Mary, I entreat you to take four or five grains of St James', that if you have any

lurking disorder, it may remove it before you set out, and prevent your falling on the road which I dread. If you are quite well, the powder will have no effect at all. . . . This fever has frightened me horribly.

On the 11th November they returned home, and Walpole's (now Lord Orford) anxious wish to see his friends, appears to have been made the subject of some offensive observations in a newspaper. An anonymous attack which created much pain.

FROM LORD ORFORD TO MISS MARY BERRY.

You have hurt me excessively! We had passed a most agreeable evening, and then you poisoned all by one cruel word. I see you are too proud to like to be obliged by me, tho' you see that my greatest, and the only pleasure I have left is to make you and your sister a little happier if I can; and *now*, when it is a little more in my power, you cross me *in trifles even*, that would compensate for the troubles that are fallen on me. I thought my age would have allowed me to have a friendship that consisted in nothing but distinguishing merit. You allow the vilest

of tribunals, the newspapers, to decide how short a way friendship may go. Where is your good sense in this conduct? And will you punish me, because, what you nor mortal being can prevent, a low anonymous scribbler pertly takes a liberty with your name? I cannot help repeating that you have hurt me.

FROM MISS BERRY.

Friday Night, Oct. 12.

I did not like to show you, nor did I myself feel while with you, *how* much I was hurt by the newspaper. To be long honoured with your friendship and remain unnoticed, I knew was impossible, and laid my account with; but to have imagined, implied, or even hinted that the purest friendship that ever actuated human bosoms should have any possible foundation in, or view to interested motives; and that he, whose *hereditary neglect* of fortune has deprived us of what might, and ought to have been our own, that we should ever afterwards be supposed to have it in view, or be described in a situation, which *must* mislead the world both as to our sentiments and our conduct, while our principles they cannot know, and if they could, would not enter into

all this I confess I cannot bear; not even your society can make up to me for it.

Would to God we had remained abroad where we might have still enjoyed as much of your confidence and friendship as ignorance and impertinence seem likely to allow us here. . . .

If our seeking your society is supposed by those ignorant of its value, to be with some view beyond its enjoyment, and our situation represented as one, which will aid the belief of this to a mean and interested world, I shall think we have perpetual reason to regret the only circumstance in our lives that could be called fortunate. . . . Do not plague yourself by answering this. . . . I am relieved by writing, and shall sleep the sounder for having thus unburthened my heart. Good night.

But the following day he wrote—

Dec. 13, 1791.

MY DEAREST ANGEL,—I had two persons talking law to me, and was forced to give an immediate answer, so that I could not even read your note till I had done. And now I do read it, it breaks my heart.

If my most pure affection has brought grief

and mortification on you, I shall be the most miserable of men. . . . You know I scarce wish to live but to carry you to Cliveden! . . . Is all your felicity to be in the power of a newspaper? Are your virtue and purity, and my innocence about you; are our consciences no shield against anonymous folly or envy? Would you only condescend to be my friend if I were a beggar. . . . For your own sake, for poor mine, combat such extravagant delicacy, and do not poison the few days of a life which you, and you only, can sweeten. . . . How could you say you wish you had not returned.

TO MISS MARY BERRY.

Happily this ill-natured gossip was soon forgotten, and their friendship went on as before. A lengthened correspondence followed, from which we quote the next letter which refers to an illness of Miss Berry.

Thursday, half afternoon, Nov. 27, '95.

MY SWEETEST,—Mr Coxe, whom I could not dismiss, has staid reading to me till this instant, till I can scarce save the post.

Thank God for a little better account of dearest Mary; yet it is not near good enough.

Still, as you say she must be kept quiet, I will suppress my impatience, and will not see her till Saturday evening. Yet I shall long to receive a more comfortable letter to-morrow morning. I dare not stay to write a syllable more. Adieu, adieu!

END OF VOL. I.

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